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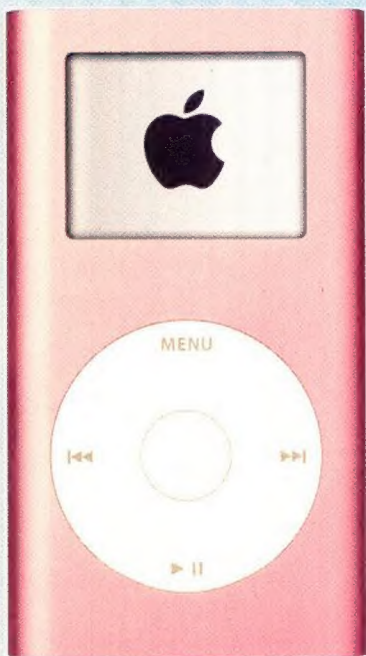
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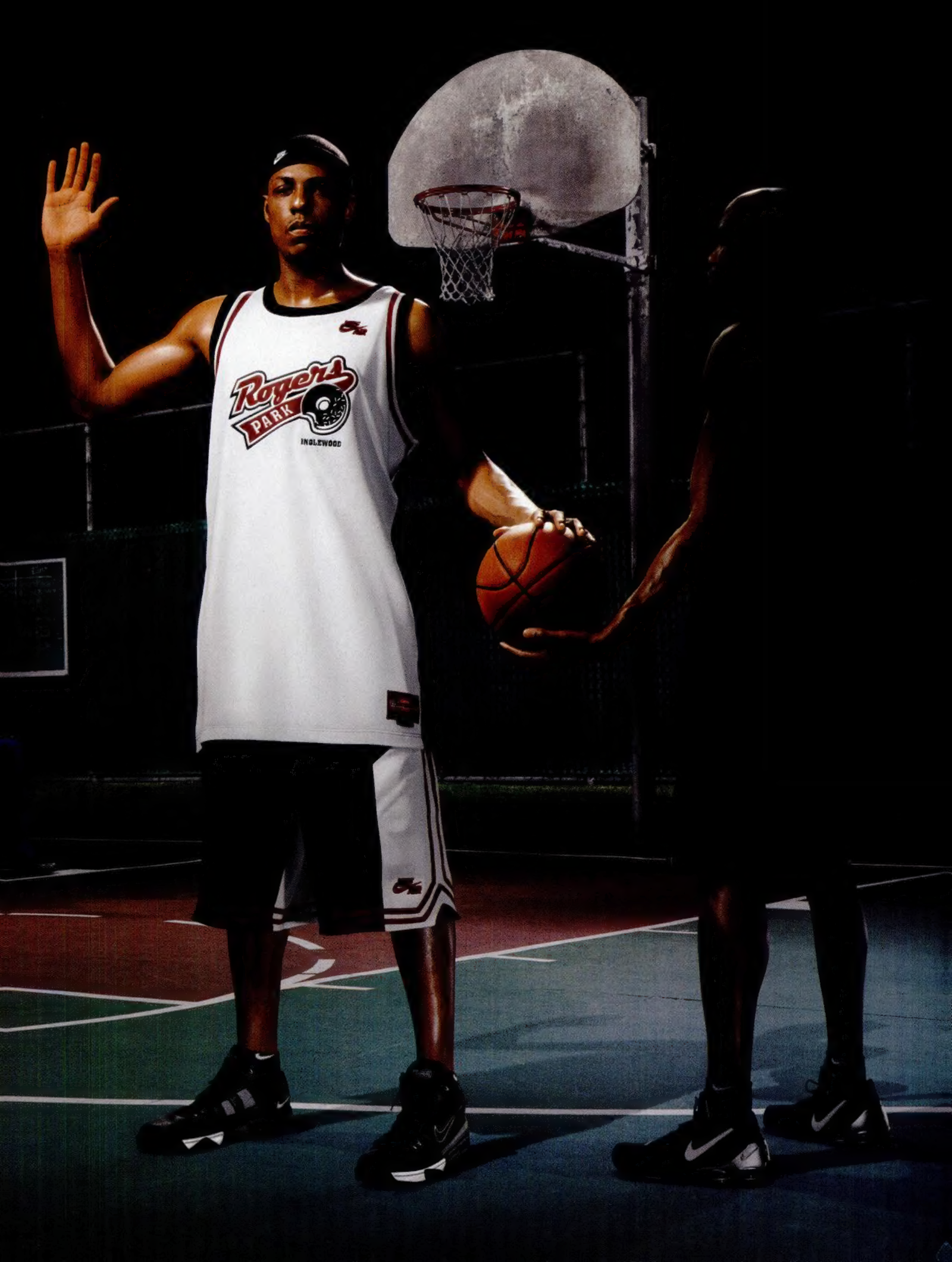
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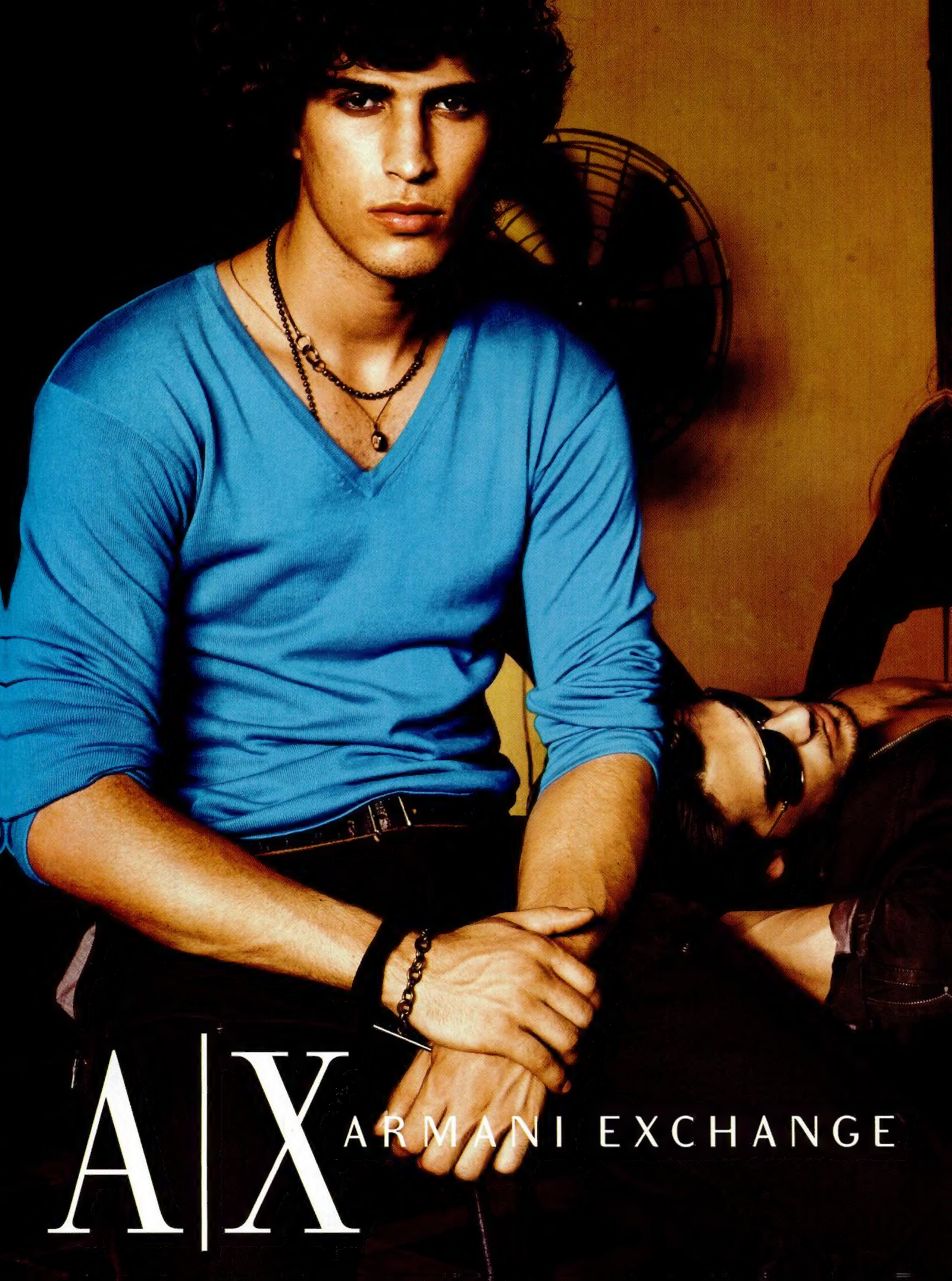
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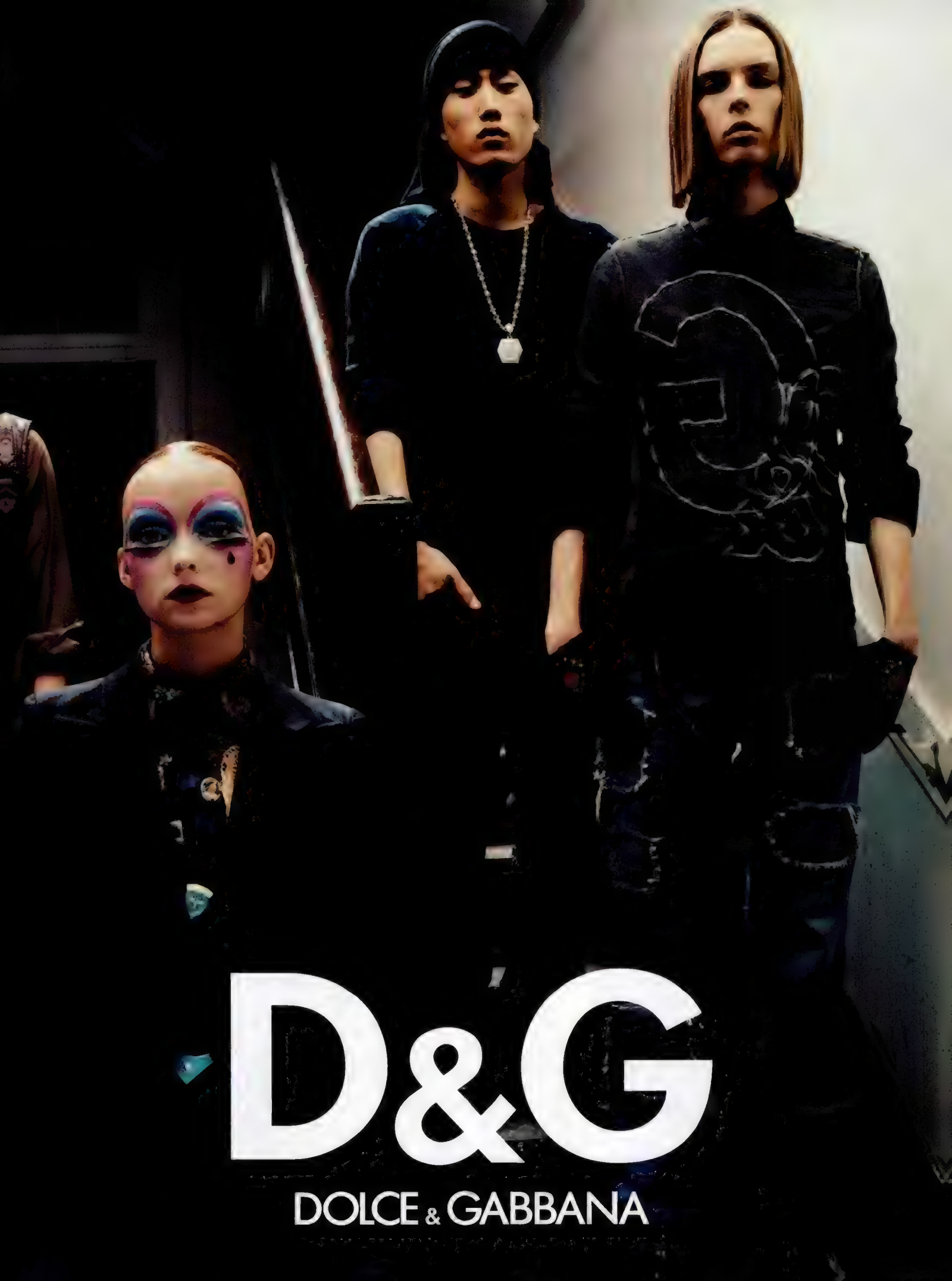




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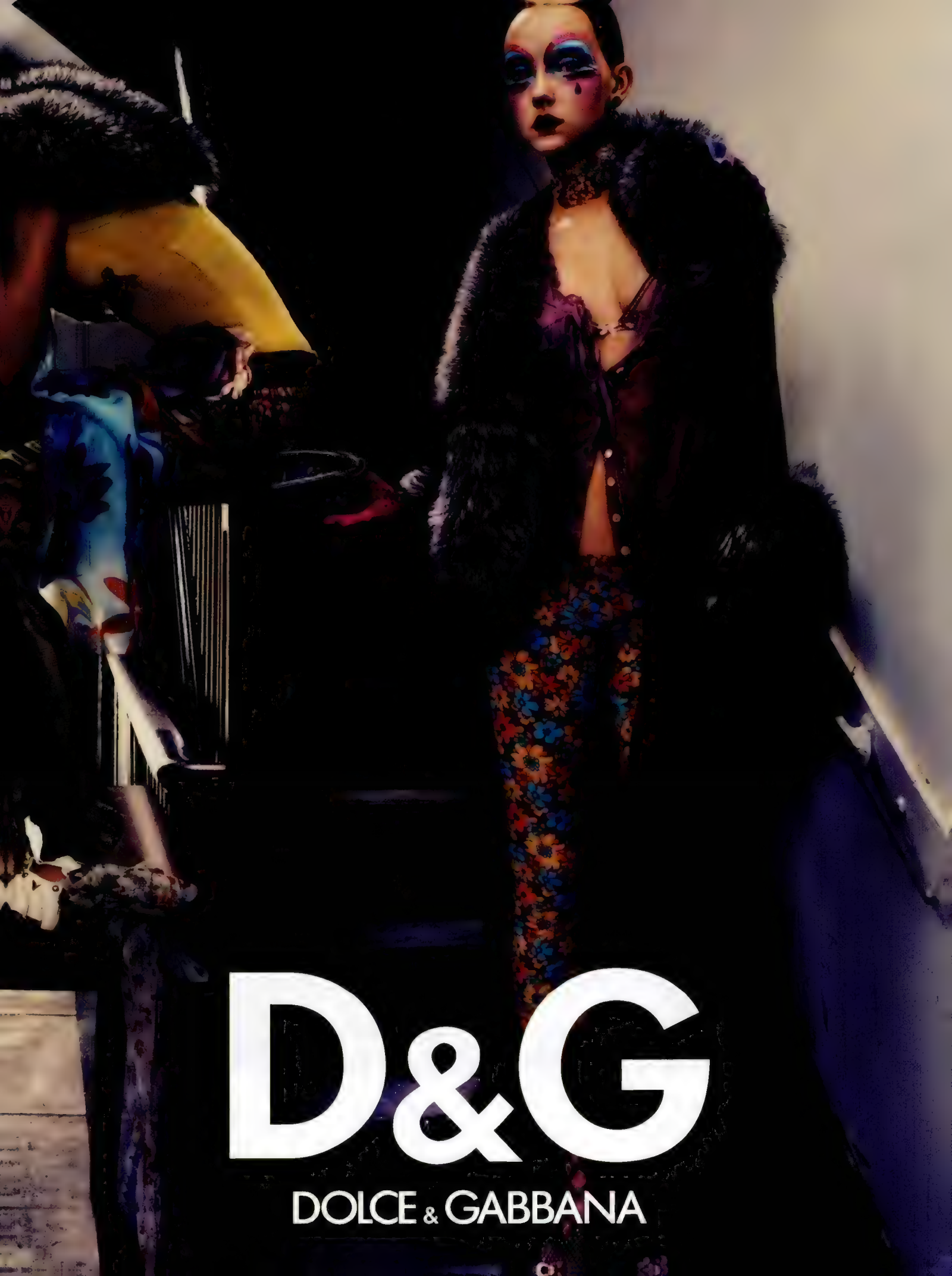




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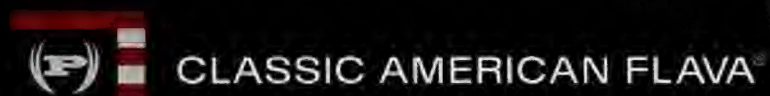
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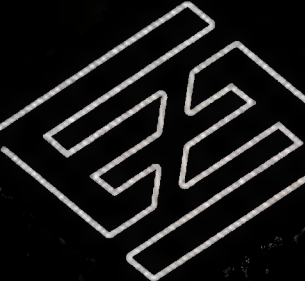
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V

09/04

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143 // The Juice 100

From wardrobe malfunctions to the crunk takeover and everything in between, check out our 11th Anniversary Juice List, bringing you the hottest people, places, and trends of the year. Plus: MVPs, celebrity trials, reality TV, flashes-in-the-pan, and much more.

172 // Time Will Tell

He has a reported \$15 million record deal/label imprint, and the streets abuzz. Is **SHYNE** the next 50 Cent? In an exclusive jailhouse interview, the passionate MC reveals his explosive plans for the future. BY AKIBA J. SOLOMON. PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANA LIXENBERG

182 // Write Thurr

Meet the authors of **STREET LITERATURE**—self-made entrepreneurs who aggressively hustle their product with hopes of finding an audience. Plus: The genre's archetypes and pioneers. BY LYNNE D JOHNSON. PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTHA COOPER

188 // All for One

How did **FAT JOE** and his **TERROR SQUAD** become flag-bearers for New York hip hop? Plus: **TS** meets *The Sopranos*. BY KEITH MURPHY. PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK MANN

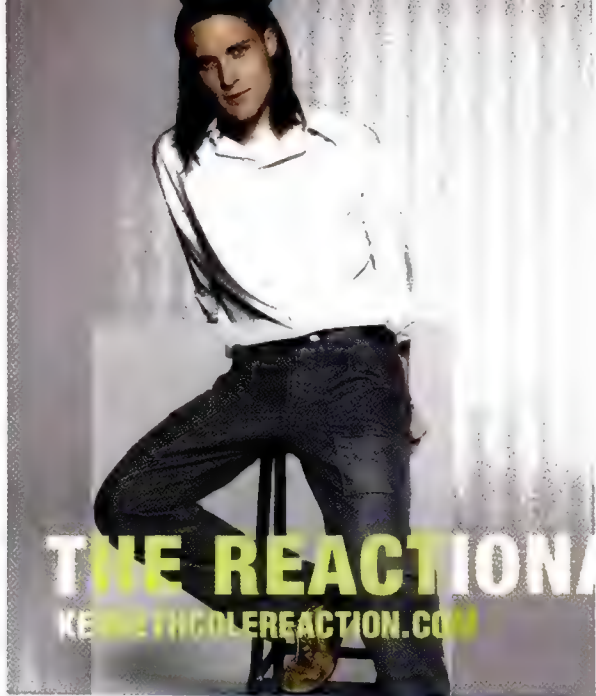
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 36)

> Shyne

On the cover and this page: ("Time Will Tell," page 172) photographed exclusively for VIBE by DANA LIXENBERG.



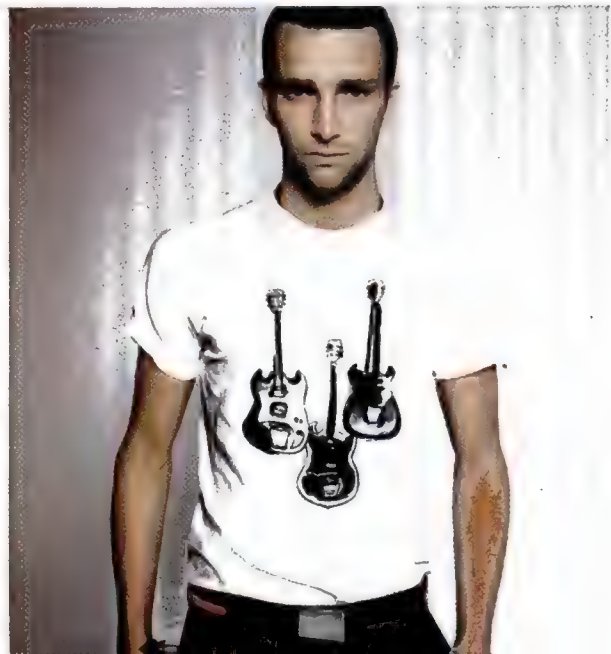
I sing myself to sleep.



A bitch without coffee.



Saving myself for marriage.



On the rebound.



I cut the labels out of all my clothes.



To this day, avoid stepping on cracks.

Am sleeping with my boss.



I don't trust people with thin lips.



I never wear the same pair of underwear twice.



KENNETH COLE
REACTION

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194 // Moment of Clarity

He's come a long way, baby. Versatile actor **JAMIE FOXX** lets loose on playing the late Ray Charles, hangin' with Tom Cruise, and uncovering the roots of black comedy. BY HARRY ALLEN. PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTIN SCHOELLER

198 // The Broken Hit Factory

A prolonged sales slump jolted the music industry into a flurry of record label mergers and layoffs. Can bigwig execs like **CLIVE DAVIS**, **LYOR COHEN**, and **LA REID** right the ship? BY KENNETH LI. ILLUSTRATION BY TAVIS COBURN

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With styles ranging from dirty dirty to so fresh and so clean, locals show you how to rock it the Southern way. PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMIL GS. STYLING BY JOHN MOORE

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Prim and proper is the order of the day in this fall's most elegant dresses. PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANETTE AURELL. STYLING BY JOHN MOORE

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> Jamie Foxx

("Moment of Clarity," page 194), photographed exclusively for VIBE by **MARTIN SCHOELLER**.



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Sean John

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> Remy Ma

("All for One," page 188)
photographed exclusively for
VIBE by **MARK MANN**; styling by
Janée Michele; makeup by JJ
for Jump/Giorgio Armani;
hair by Terrence Davidson
for Ice N' Hair.com.



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Photos by Johnny Nunez (1-12)

THE FOURTH ANNUAL QUINCY JONES ACHIEVEMENT AWARD CEREMONY

VIBE CELEBRATED BLACK MUSIC MONTH AND THE FOURTH ANNUAL QUINCY JONES ACHIEVEMENT AWARD HONORING CHRIS LIGHTY, CEO AND MONA SCOTT, PRESIDENT OF VIOLATOR RECORDS & MANAGEMENT, AT THE LIGHTHOUSE AT CHELSEA PIERS. DJ ROCKWILDER SPUN AT THE EVENT, WHICH FEATURED A SPECIAL PERFORMANCE BY VIOLATOR RECORDING ARTIST, BUSTA RHYMES. FEATURING PRESENTING PARTNER MARTELL.

Martell hostesses serve it up. Luke Elder, business-management associate, Mercedes-Benz USA; Danielle Austen, group account director, Mercedes-Benz USA, Footsteps Group; Kass Dawson, emerged markets supervisor, Mercedes-Benz USA; and Kenard Gibbs, president. Sylvia Rhone poses with the Maybach in front of the venue. Mimi Valdes, editor-in-chief; Chris Lighty; Mona Scott; and Todd Moscovitz, partner, Violator. Kedar Massenburg, president, Universal/Motown; Barry Wiess, president, Jive Records; Chris Lighty; Steve Shapiro, attorney; Kenard Gibbs; Peter Thea, senior vice president, Jive

Records; and Jimmy Henchmen, CEO, Henchmen Entertainment. Sincere Thompson, owner, Frontline Marketing; Elektra recording artist Lil' Mo; Tamara Gardellis, national event marketing/PR manager, Pernod Ricard USA (Martell); and Kevin Liles, president, Def Jam/Def Soul. Sylvia Rhone and Busta Rhymes. Mona Scott and Chris Lighty are presented with the exclusive limited edition bottle of Martell C'reation by Tamara Gardellis. Busta Rhymes. Lil' Mo, Mona Scott, and her son can't resist the Maybach. Shani Saxon, executive editor; Mimi Valdes; and Karla Radford, executive director of events and artist relations.

THANK YOU:

Gus Heningburg (Bodie Entertainment); Lou Palumbo (the Elite Security Agency Ltd.); Rehana Dutta, Lonnie Staley (Footsteps); Tamara François, Aria Wright (Frontline Marketing); Inza Bucello, Eric Hoffman, and the staff at the Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers; Sasha Reuther (Max Curious Productions); Christine Reidinger (Mercedes-Benz USA); Brad at Prism Lighting; Shanell Alexander, Karen Body, Melissa Carter, James Cruz, Lorie Dobbins, Jessica Fontaine, Nakachi Griffen, Gail Hansen, Hassan, Ice, Claudine Joseph, Mike Lighty, Du Love, Kimberly Mason, Andre Neal, Latarsha Rose, Yandielle Smith, and Brent Walker (Violator).

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Kimora Lee Simmons



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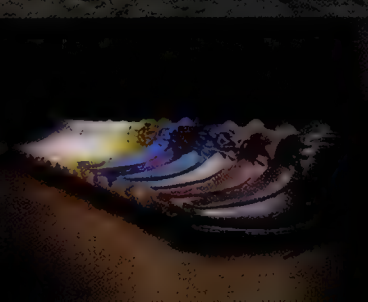
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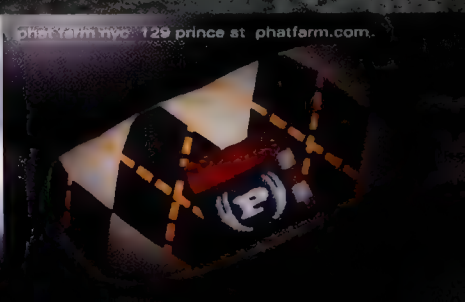
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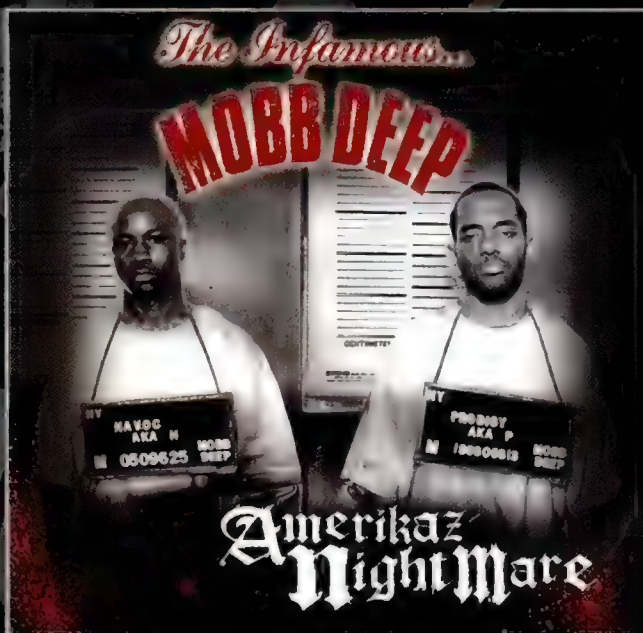


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sam goody's

got its ear to the street



This month's reviews will have you visiting various sections in your local Sam Goody store, from rap and reggae to gospel and DVDs. So make sure you're wearing comfortable shoes when you shop.

The Beef II is a must-have DVD. I was entranced for the entire 106 minutes. Actor Keith David narrates as the various beefs are revealed and dissected. Expect to learn a lot about the disputes between LL Cool J and Canibus, K-Solo and DMX, Royce Da 5'9" and D-12, and KRS-One and Nelly. But nothing beats the original beef between Roxanne Shante and Everybody.

Fans of I.C.P. will be very pleased with the debut from Mike E. Clark and Prozac, a.k.a. **Project Deadman**, titled *Self Inflicted*. I liked several tracks on this rock-driven, rap-inspired set. The dark narrative on "Access Denied" is accompanied by killer electric guitar riffs. On "Day of the Dead," the duo's delivery leans more toward hip hop and is reminiscent of Scarface.

B.G. may not be a Cash Money soldier anymore, but his new set, *Life After Cash Money*, proves he's still a "hot boy." On "Where U Been," he reveals that he's still down with former labelmates Lil' Wayne, Turk, and Juvenile, but returning to Cash Money is not part of his plan.

Pharcyde have never received the proper accolades from the hip hop community that they deserve. Perhaps their new joint, *Humboldt Beginnings*, will change that. Listeners will get a little bit of everything on this set, from reflective rhymes on "Rules & Regulations" to a little reggae flavor on "Mixed Greens" to humor, on such tracks as "Right B4."

Spice 1 and **MC Eiht** recently hit the streets with their latest venture, *The Pioneers*. These cats have enjoyed national exposure while keeping the passion and grit in their work. The West Coast style beats are well represented throughout this CD. The "Mack" bonus track is my favorite cut. I was drawn to the laid-back beats paired with raunchy lyrics—Goldie would be proud.

The **Beatnuts** are synonymous with quality hip hop, and their new set, *Milk Me*, validates their elite standing. The exceptional production on this 16-track album is apparent on such cuts as "Madness" and "U Nahmsayin." I chuckled when I heard the opening line on "We Getting Paper," featuring Triple Seis, on which the Beatnuts express their contempt for tightwads.

MC's **Rock Marcy**, **Mic Raw**, **Dino Brave**, and **Laku** are the four edgy MCs collectively known as **The U.N.** Their cleverly named album, *UN or U Out*, is in stores now. I was impressed with the clarity of U.N.'s rapping as they maneuvered through their verses on "What They Want." Vintage Wu-Tang Clan came to mind as I listened to this album.

Available now in Sam Goody is the new LP, *African Holocaust*, by the legendary reggae act **Steel Pulse**. The message of equality, justice, peace and truth permeate throughout, on songs like "Make Us a Nation" and "Must Be a Way." And don't be fooled by the happy up-tempo beat on "No More Weapons," on which Steel Pulse sing about war, mass destruction, and the racial unrest in today's world.

Church is in session on the **Rance Allen Group's** new album, *The Live Experience*. This CD offers tracks filled with powerful words that encourage you to sing, clap, and count your blessings. R.A.G. will move even the darkest soul on "Something About the Name Jesus" with their gospel soul-influenced harmonies.

First, I must apologize to **KRS-One** for having such limited space to review his latest set, *Keep Right*. This rap icon puts it down on this LP with few obscenities. This 23-track album is filled with top-notch cuts, but my favorites were "Illegal Business" and "Stop Skeemin," which features generous samplings of "Happy Feelings" by Maze.

These albums are available now at Sam Goody. But here are a few releases scheduled to hit the shelves in the near future: **Nas** 9/14, **Nelly** 9/14, **Yung Wun** 9/14, **Brian McKnight** 9/21, **Game** 9/21, and **Mos Def** 9/28.

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LONG ROAD HOME:
The street outside Clinton
Correctional Facility,
Shyne's temporary address
in Dannemora, N.Y.

Shining Star

When Shyne first called me late last year, I wasn't sure what to expect. Ayana, a mutual friend, had asked me if it was okay to give him my cell number. He told her he needed to speak to me, but didn't give any details. Usually, the last thing I'd ever want is to give an artist I don't know my cell number, but under the circumstances, I figured it was cool.

Within minutes, Shyne called and got straight to the point. He spoke about how much he dug my first issue as editor-in-chief (January 2004), particularly how we handled the Jay-Z article. He had not spoken to the media since he'd been imprisoned, so he believed VIBE was the best place to break his silence in an exclusive cover story.

Now, I have to admit, I was surprised. I was curious as to why Shyne wanted VIBE (especially since we hadn't approached him) over all the other magazines I heard were trying to get him. Some rappers feel like they need to do the all-hip hop magazines first, to maintain street credibility. When I told Shyne this, he said, "Look, I'm trying to reach as wide an audience as possible. Besides, the streets can pick up VIBE!"

Well, he wasn't telling me something we didn't already know. It was just nice to hear him recognize the power of our broad-reaching circulation, the highest of any urban music magazine. Artists rarely negotiate their own covers, and he was making a

convincing argument, explaining why VIBE readers would be interested in his story. I don't like to make cover decisions without consulting my staff, so I told Shyne I'd give him an answer after speaking to them.

The next day we accepted his offer. This was before he even had the new record deal and joint venture with Island Def Jam. We were convinced it would be a compelling piece of journalism and wanted to do the cover ASAP. However, since we're committed to giving our readers the complete story, it was important to do a photo shoot. We knew this wasn't gonna be easy.

After months of letters and phone calls, we finally arrived at Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora, N.Y. It was intense from the moment we stepped into the jail. The two guards who chaperoned us issued a stern warning to be careful. They said that an

inmate once stole a journalist's pen and held her hostage. I tried my best not to laugh at their concern. There was *no* reason for us to fear Shyne.

Since we weren't sure how much time we'd have, photographer Dana Lixenberg and her assistant, Kirsten Thoen, set up as fast as humanly possible. When they brought Shyne to the jail office's conference room, he barely said hello 'cause he knew time was limited. We did as many setups as we could, and thankfully, the guards let us shoot until we finished our rolls of film.

Visiting people in jail is always a miserable experience. You can't help but feel sad for leaving them behind when you bounce. Although I was at Clinton on business, I still felt horrible. I can't imagine serving an unjustly long sentence in such a high-security facility.

Somehow, Shyne still manages to find the positive in all this. Yes, he did get an amazing new record deal and venture from behind bars. Yes, his legend on the streets grows each day for not snitching at his trial. He's definitely got juice, but he feels the best thing is how this time has made him a better instrument. He says the rhymes now flow effortlessly. Just imagine if every rapper took three years to completely focus on their lyrics. Hip hop would surely be a better place.

Besides our Shyne story (page 172), written by Akiba J. Solomon, there's more in our Juice Issue to keep your eyes glued to our pages. Don't miss our annual Juice List with this year's hottest people, places, and things (page 143). We've also got features on Terror Squad (page 188), by Keith Murphy; Jamie Foxx (page 194), by Harry Allen; the street literature phenomenon (page 182), by Lynne d Johnson; and "51 Essential Albums" you better own (page 204)! Also check out Citizen Cope (Next, page 135), whose music I love so much, I wrote the article myself. Enjoy!

MIMI VALDÉS
Editor-in-Chief

P.S. If you've got comments about this issue or suggestions for stories you'd like to read*, I wanna hear from you! Hit me back at mimi@vibe.com.

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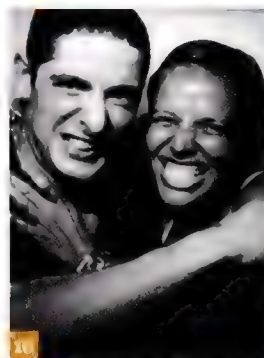
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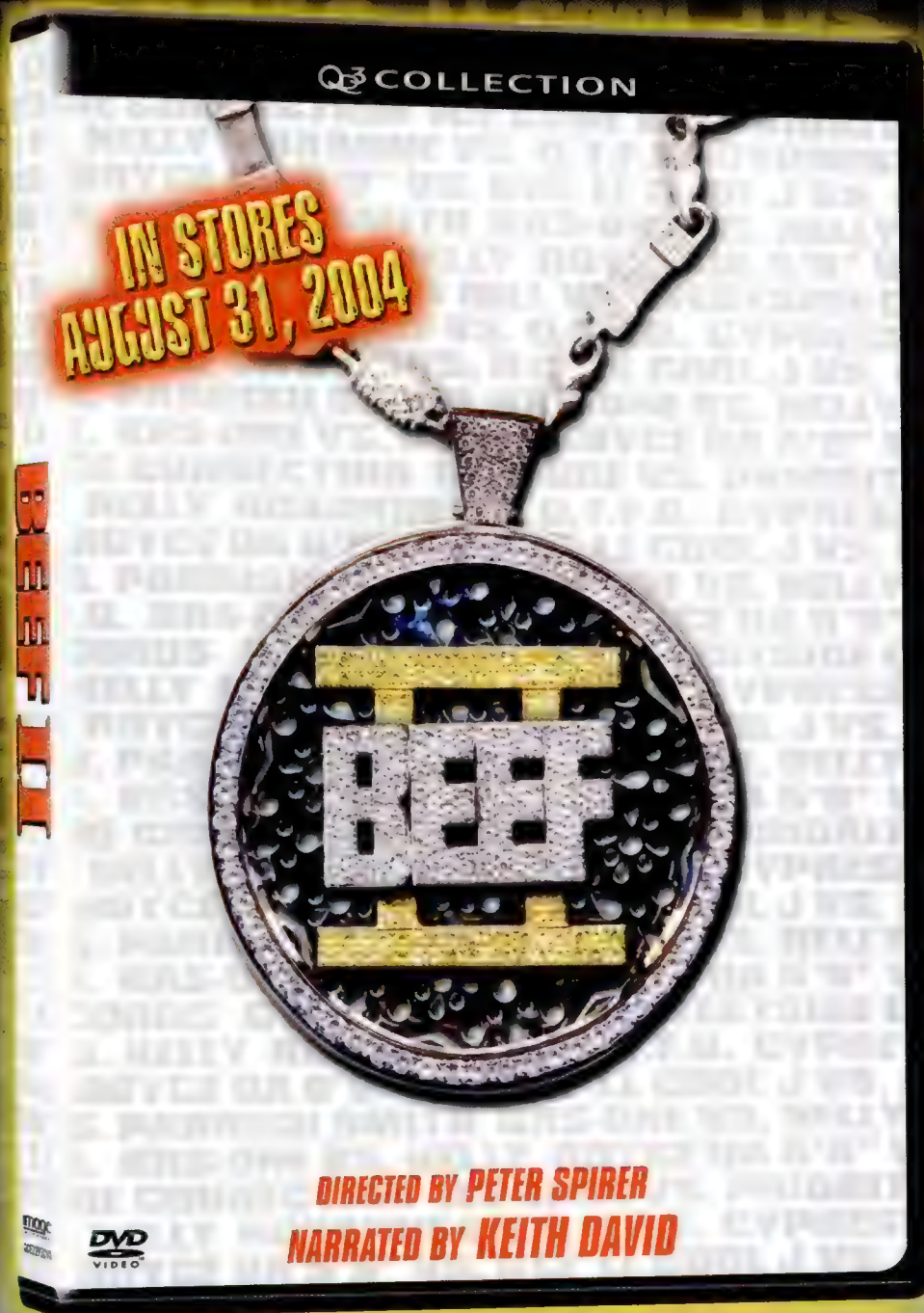
Happy People

For real, y'all. I love my staff.
They're the most creative,
knowledgeable, and hardwork-
ing crew ever. Let's give them a
round of applause for making
VIBE so dope! *Mimi Valdés*

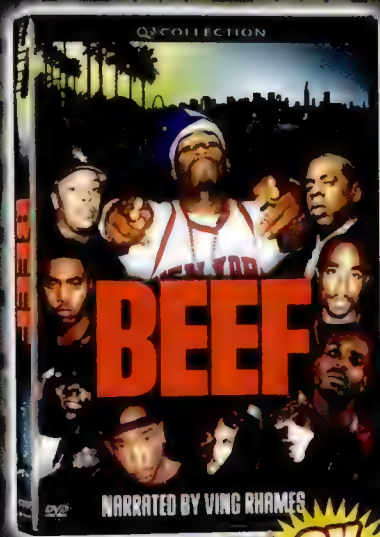


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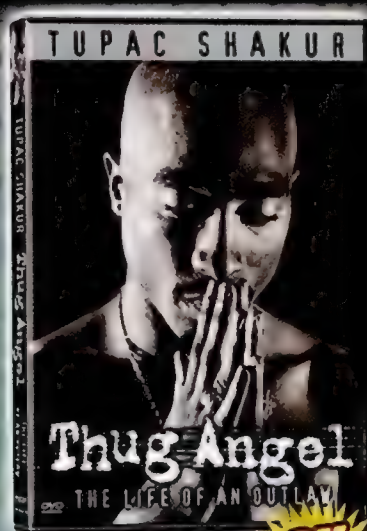
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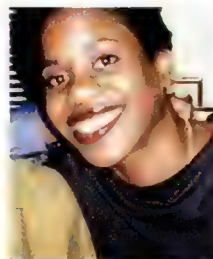
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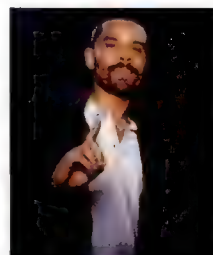
the guest list

> This month, **Saptosa Foster**, 28, trades Southern-Caribbean recipes with Trick Daddy ("Thug Cookout," page 113). "He could give Emeril a run for his money," says the North Carolina-raised Foster, a winner in this year's Crisco All-American Pie Recipe Contest. The ATL-based writer also contributes to *Complex* and *XXL*. She also wrote our Next story on Atlanta's new R&B star Ciara (page 138).



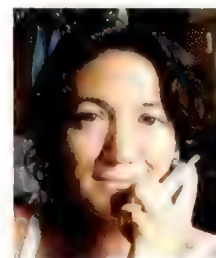
> **Akiba J. Solomon**, 30, used to ride the school bus in West Philly with VIBE Executive Editor Shani Saxon-Parrish. This month, Solomon rides to Clinton Correctional Facility to chat with a "deeply spiritual and humble" Shyne ("Time Will Tell," page 172). A Howard University grad, Solomon lives in Brooklyn and freelances for *King* and *Essence*. She is also coediting an anthology about black women's bodies.

> Longtime VIBE contributor **Dana Lixenberg**, 39, has worked with many legends, including Prince and Tupac, so shooting an "intense" Shyne ("Time Will Tell," page 172) for our cover was right up her alley. "We came with a mission, and he got what it was," says the Amsterdam-born, Manhattan-based photographer, whose work also appears in *The New York Times Magazine* and *The New Yorker*.



> Brooklyn-based lensman **Jamil GS** redefines the term Renaissance man. A VIBE contributor since '96, the Danish import is master of five disciplines. When he's not shooting for *The New York Times*, *Made*, or *French Vogue*, GS pursues directing, stock trading, designing his own clothing line, GSISM, and "hanging with the lady." This month, he heads down South for "Mississippi Mackin'" (page 214).

> New York-based fashionista **Anette Aurell** shoots five "gorgeous" models for our garden tea party story ("Splendor in the Grass," page 222). The Tokyo-born photographer enjoys cooking, swimming, and spending time with her two kids (Louis, 11, and Mai, 12). Aurell also freelances for *i-D*, *Purple*, and *Elle*. Her forthcoming documentary, which will take place in the desert, is a work in progress.



in-house counsel

> As Fashion Director, **John Moore**, 32, creates images that marry the worlds of designer brands and streetwear. Before joining VIBE, the Connecticut-born Moore worked as a stylist for Norah Jones and the 2003 Ecco Unltd. campaign. His other calling—Christian missionary work—has taken him to Europe and Africa. Moore's motto: "Where there is no vision, the people perish."



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vibe raters

CHECK OUT THE STAFF'S PLAYLIST



< **THE ROOTS**, "Don't Say Nuthin'" (Geffen): Hot ta def

TERROR SQUAD, "Yeah Yeah Yeah" (SRC): Bonafide BX banger

SERGE GAINSBORG, "New York USA" (Universal): Fun City song

USHER, "SuperStar II" (Arista): A shining achievement



< **ELIANE ELIAS**, *Dreamer* (Bluebird): Mellow Brazilian jazz

BLESTENATION, *Fuck a Mixtape Vol. 3* (MBUGout City): Rocked-out rap

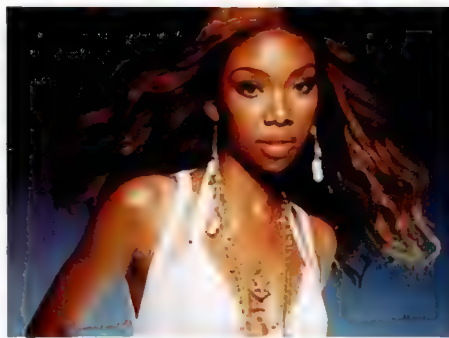
FRANZ FERDINAND, *Franz Ferdinand* (Sony): Art-house funk



SAIGON, *WARNING SHOTS*, (Abandoned Nation): Ear-bombing explosion

< **UGK**, "Diamonds & Wood" (Jive): Sweet, syrupy rap

OLIVER MTUKUDZI, *Vhunze Moto* (Putumayo): Hypnotic guitar licks



KEVIN LYTTLE, "Turn Me On" (Atlantic): Caribbean sound-off

< **BRANDY**, "Talk About Our Love" (Atlantic): Passion speak-out

LAURYN HILL, "Ex-Factor" (Ruffhouse/Columbia): Still missing you



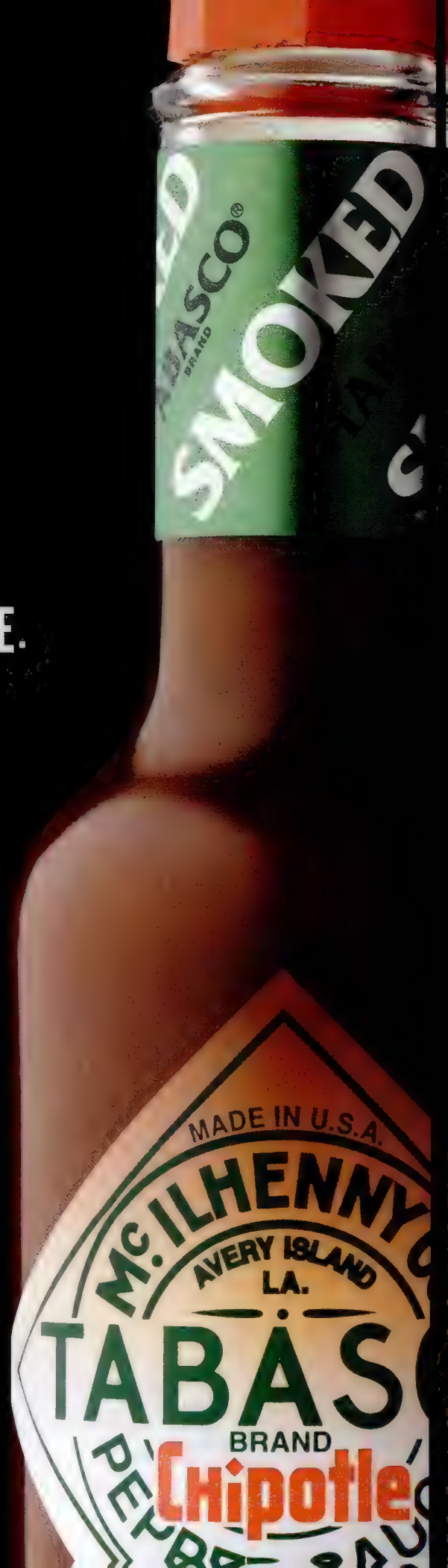
ELEPHANT MAN, FEAT. TWISTA, YOUNGBLOODZ & KIPRICH, "Jook Gal (Wine, Wine) Remix" (VP/Atlantic): Dip it low

< **PHOENIX**, *Alphabetical* (Source): Funky-fresh electro

CAM'RON, FEAT. JAHEIM, "Lord You Know" (Roc-A-Fella): Real 'hood hop

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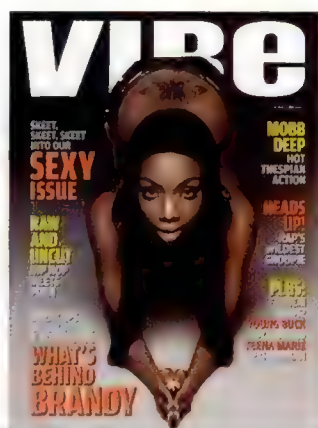


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Exposed

I enjoyed the Brandy article ["Not That Innocent," by Cheo Hodari Coker, July 2004] and am happy to see her continue to grow and change. I remember before the release of *Never Say Never*, she announced she had stage fright, and at that moment I realized she was a teenager facing the same insecurities we all face every day. She has done a remarkable job of managing love, life, and a career without losing her mind. I appreciate Brandy's willingness to make mistakes, try again, and then share her experiences with us.

Kristen Carter, Newark, N.J.

Every time I hear Brandy's name I get chills. She is so hot and has been since her first album. I enjoyed reading the article about her, and I can honestly see how mature she has gotten. I love the way she is not downright looking like a ho (like Beyoncé), but is being sexy with 100 percent class. I'm looking forward to her new album. Upon reading the article, people should finally stop hating on Brandy and understand that she has her faults and problems, too. She is a woman, a sensual woman.

*Deonte, aka Baalid
Los Angeles, Calif.*

It's not as if VIBE is the first magazine to put a female star on its cover who's scantily dressed and in a sexually suggestive pose, but something about your treatment of Brandy was particularly offensive. It wasn't the photo itself, which was purely sexy. It was the cheap-shot line, "What's Behind Brandy?" It's not hard to figure out what the combination of words and image was meant to conjure up. What is especially sad is that in the article, she clearly expresses her desire to "be sexy but tasteful at the same time." Your cover undercuts her wishes. Sure, men in the music industry (especially African-American men) are sexualized as well in

the press, but at least they don't have to bend over and take it up the rear.

*Alistair Schneider
Jamaica Plain, Mass.*

I honestly never thought that I would ever see the day when there could be a VIBE cover that tops the March 2004 issue's outstanding Alicia Keys cover (I still get "chicken-skin" just thinking about it!). But that day arrived the moment I laid my eyes on the phenomenal, extraordinary, absolutely purr-fect Brandy cover for the ultimate Sexy Issue! There is no way in the world that I could ever be able to avoid the irresistible spell of Brandy at her sexiest, sultriest, and, yes, classiest. This cover will never, ever be surpassed! I thank you, Cheo Hodari Coker, photographer Michelangelo Di Battista, VIBE, and, most especially, Brandy, for the thrill!

*Stephen Lee Roldan
Aiea, Hawaii*

I just wanted to write and let you guys know that the new issue with Brandy on the cover has got to be the *sexiest* cover for any magazine that I have *ever* seen. When I walked up to the magazine section at 7-Eleven, it immediately caught my eye, and I had to have it. I know this might

sound crazy, but Miss Norwood was my childhood crush. I love Brandy as well as VIBE. Thanks a lot, and keep up the good work. Your magazine is hot.

*George
Orange County, Calif.*

Brandy, please say it isn't so! I was so upset to see yet another talented young sista put on blast

like she was posing for the cover of *Playboy* instead of VIBE. I expected more from her and more from VIBE. I understand she's an adult now and that she wants to have a sexier, more mature image, but does she have to get in the doggystyle position to achieve that?

*C. White
St. Louis, Mo.*

your best shot

JASMINE RIGGS, HOUSTON, TEXAS



GO SHAWTY: Junior (left) makes mama proud.

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/ mail /

speak up

> Last month we asked: **Has the revelation that U.S. troops tortured Iraqi prisoners dishonored the military as a whole? Why or why not?** And you said:

No, I don't think so, because there are still a lot of good military men in Iraq fighting for us. Just because one or two people want to do something terrible doesn't mean that the whole military is dishonored.

*Terrance
Lauderhill, Fla.*

It dishonors part of the military. Not all U.S. service people behave like the ones shown on the videos. What they did was cruel, and they should be ashamed and punished.

*Dayto
Detroit, Mich.*

Not in my eyes. Think about the prisoners who were locked up for killing or trying to kill American soldiers. What would you do if your best friend was killed and you were put in charge of the person who did it?

*Nick, U.S. soldier in Iraq
Little Rock, Ark.*

If we are fighting for freedom and democracy, we shouldn't be hypocrites about our own words. Now, every nation is going to think that we are the devils.

*James
Atlanta, Ga.*



Each issue, VIBE throws out a question racking all of our brains. Log on to www.vibe.com, and click on "Speak Up!" Say your bit, include your full name and city where you live, and you just might see your response here.

> This month's question: **Who would win an MC battle between T.I. and Cam'Ron? And why?**

Skeletons in the Closet

After reading "All Falls Down" [by Kathy Dobie, July 2004], I was left with the feeling that Karrine Steffans continues to live in the fantasy world that caused her so much pain. Either the writer or Karrine still relishes her past infamy, because they fail to elaborate on how she has gotten her life back on track. She mentions receiving a big-screen television from Shaquille O'Neal with a sense of gloating that I don't believe serves any purpose. Karrine further showed a lack of growth at the very end by stating she wanted "regular stuff," like a nanny, two cars, a truck, jet skis, and so on. Regular stuff is getting a decent job and supporting yourself and not allowing someone to do it for you.

*Makia Jackson
Willingboro, N.J.*

The Karrine Steffans story is sad yet something that every young female pursuing that lifestyle should know about. Things aren't all good in the industry, and when the camera stops, life doesn't. It was funny that Kar-

rine would call her friends "pathetic." Why, because they don't give brain for backstage passes and glasses of Cristal?

*Jeremy Venable
Morgantown, N.C.*

I was struck by something I read in the July 2004 issue of VIBE. I can't believe that the ex-video girl left her son with his abusive father while she was in Los Angeles. If he was abusive to her, what makes her think he wasn't that way to her son?

*J.M.O.
Nashville, Tenn.*

Karrine Steffans can truly say she had it all. But having it all doesn't make you happier all the time. Happy times for her involved casual sex, drugs, and alcohol. And when she was at her lowest, her "colleagues" weren't around. True friends are hard to come by. But when they do, it's important to take notice. Although Karrine was down, she was not out. She gathered herself, rebuilding from the bottom up. Now, with her priorities straight, she



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can look to the future and appreciate life that much more.

Lester Greene
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Makin' Banks

In your music reviews, you compared two of the G Unit members, Lloyd Banks and Young Buck [Revolutions, by Rondell Conway, July 2004], and gave Banks three-and-a-half records and Buck four. That was a mistake. Lloyd Banks won Mixtape Artist of the Year. How can you sleep on that? Banks dropped three underground *Best of Banks* albums before he released his major-label debut. Banks spits fire. Don't get me wrong, Young Buck has talent, but he can't touch Banks. The similes and metaphors Banks raps leave you with your mouth open. When his voice graces any speaker, people stop what they're doing to catch what he's saying because he is that amazing.

Latasha N. Mellien
Miami, Fla.

Affirmative Action

I read the Side Hustle article about T.I. [Play, "Destroy and Rebuild," by Donnie Kwak, July

2004], and I just wanted to say it's about time. I'm tired of so many wealthy black celebrities only talking about recycling money back into the poor black communities of America and not doing anything about it. I am proud to see this man, T.I. (Clifford Harris Jr.), take the initiative to rebuild a community that he claims he helped to destroy. I only wish that more people had his drive. Too many hip hop artists get a bad rap because of the troublesome lifestyles they lived before reaching success. T.I. sets a great example of how a man is supposed to take responsibility. Thank you, Mr. Harris. I wish you more success with New Finish Construction as well as your music career.

Brandi Williams
New Castle, Del.

WRITE TO VIBE & SEND YOUR PHOTOS

Please send letters to VIBE MAIL, 215 Lexington Avenue, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10016, or e-mail vibe@vibe.com. Send photos to VIBE, Your Best Shot (same address). Or e-mail digital images at 300 dpi to vibe@vibe.com. Include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. **All photos must include photographer's name and contact information.** Photos become the property of VIBE and will not be returned.

say word

Send us your best poetry or lyrics in **90 words or less** on the next topic of "scrumptious" to sayword@vibe.com, and you might see it here. Make sure you include your name, song or poem title, and a contact number. Check out this "survival" poem by Victoria Juarez of El Paso, Texas.

A mother at 14
Cloaked in the disguise of being worry free
Making ends meet to feed my future generation
Sole provider he depends on me for his survival
I seem unbreakable, my foundation unshakeable
Here is my survival.
A million tears can't wash away
what is reality
Put my stilettos on and wear
something sweet
Pays my rent, this is how we eat
Lights are flashing
music blaring
Gentleman staring down on me
Decisions I have made to pave a
way for our existence.



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The Man Who Could Not Sing



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A Good Combination

Hip hop has had posse cuts, but now artists are teaming up on full-lengths. BY JON CARAMANICA

Illustration by DOUGLAS FRASER

To make it seem credible to outsiders, critics used to say hip hop was like jazz—two musically inventive African-American art forms established as cultural strategies to deal with social hardship.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 92)



And the analogy kinda worked, except for the problem that on record, hip hop was nothing like jazz. The improvisation and flexibility weren't really there, and jazz's adult cool wasn't the best look for a genre of youthful rebellion.

But then, why was hip hop's recording process so predictable and confined? A good example: Special collaborations—whether between two rappers, or an MC and a producer—have been mostly for individual songs, not albums. By comparison, jazz groups switched partners smoothly and often.

Now, finally, hip hop seems to be catching on. When Jay-Z and R. Kelly paired up for *The Best of Both Worlds* in 2002, it was rightly praised as a breakthrough. Perhaps because it didn't live up to its full commercial potential (which could probably be more realistically attributed to Kelly's kiddie-porn charges), the industry remained wary, until recently.

First, Kells will return for a second *Best of Both Worlds*, with Cash Money's Baby. As a

Soon you'll play six degrees of separation in the rap game.

thug countermeasure, Cam'Ron has tapped roughneck crooner Jaheim for the upcoming *Best of Both Hoods* project. 50 Cent and Slim Shady have teased a project, as have Cormega and AZ, and David Banner and Lil' Flip.

And pretty soon, you'll be able to play six degrees of separation with everybody in the rap game. Underground rappin' producers Jay Dee and Madlib joined forces for last year's Jaylib project, which Madlib followed up with *Madvillain*, a group project with MF Doom. Doom has in turn announced a collaborative LP with *The Grey Album* architect Danger Mouse, who also announced plans to team up for a CD with former Goodie Mobber Cee-Lo.

These one-off collabo albums serve several purposes: They allow artists to get their creative rocks off and to sate their fans' thirst in between conventional albums. And also, the pressure is off; they don't always have to work—an experiment is just that—but the potential upside of the risk-taking is too great to ignore. Imagine a sound clash between DJ Premier and Pete Rock, love letters between Nas and Kelis, or even a make-nice peace offering between 50 and Ja. Well, maybe that last one isn't such a good idea.

> droppin' dime

1 Mitchell & Ness sweat suits (mitchellandness.com). Throwbacks may be a thing of the past, but these new sweats bring sportswear back to the future. (\$220)

2 Beef II (qd3entertainment.com). Where's the beef? Right here, fool! Pick up the second installment of QD3's hit DVD series exploring infamous feuds like Canibus and LL, and Ice Cube and Cypress Hill...or else! (\$19.99)

3 Aneta Genova iPod cases (aneta-genova.com). Okay ladies, so your shoes match your bag—but does your iPod match your shoes? Aneta Genova makes sure you cooerrrdinate. (\$90–\$190)

4 GameFly (gamefly.com). Now even your mailman got game. Video games, that is. For \$13.95–\$29.95 a month, GameFly brings it to your front door like Jill Scott.

5 Miniature Moët bottles (moet.com). Grab your grill, your girl, and your mini Mo' bottle, and toast to the end of one crazy summer! (\$12 each)

6 Adidas Respect ME (adidas.com). Missy Elliott takes the Adidas Originals line of sneakers and gear, flips it, and reverses it—so now you can work it.

7 Avirex Aviator (avirex.com). Avirex's customized Lincoln Aviator is the definition of fly. (\$89,000)

8 Strip for My Man (stripformyman.com). To the window, to the wall! This DVD tutorial gives ladies the low down on gettin' low. (\$19.95)

9 Complete Jewelry (completetechnique.com). Drop a bomb on 'em when you add these exclusive pieces to your mix. Sweat the technique. (\$120 and up)

10 Marc Jacobs perfume (neimanmarcus.com). Make sure your roses smell right with this new fragrance by the MJ of the fashion game. (\$65–\$85)
Compiled by Damien Lemon



slanguistics

BUSTDOWN: *n.* A sexually promiscuous female, especially from Chicago. Twista shouts out his special lady on "So Sexy": "My Chi girl bustdown, make it straight buck"; Cam'Ron creeps for his own on the Diplomats' "Dipset Anthem": "I'm on the Westside of Chicago / Lookin' for a bustdown."



power picks

RUSSELL SIMMONS'S Top Five Juice Mantras

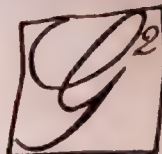
- > Give.
- > Still your mind; see God everywhere.
- > If you want money, help someone make money.
- > To be happy is to create happiness.
- > Giving of service is the only way to make money or to be happy.



NECKLACE PENDANT: MASAHITO NOGUCHI; SIMMONS: JAMIE MCCARTHY/WIREIMAGE

At G. Garvin's in LA, Chef Gerry Garvin serves up his unique style of cooking, blending Southern and European influences to create dishes that defy categorization.

Limits are irrelevant to me

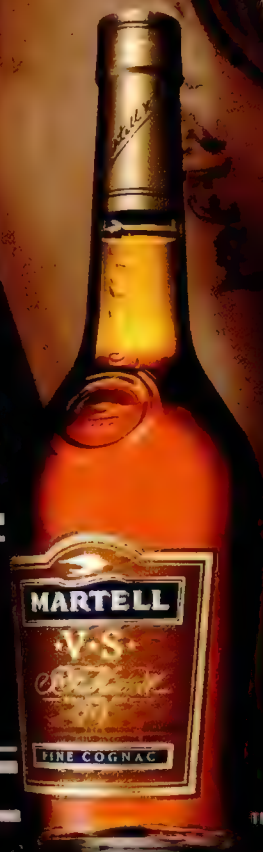


RISE ABOVE



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So Watcha Sayin'?

Green-eyed, single black male looking for independent, fun-lovin' woman. Will **ERICK SERMON** find his match?

As an accomplished career man, Erick Sermon, 35, is just the type that might win at a HurryDate event. Sure, he's got issues, who doesn't? E-Double says he's on the prowl for a "woman with cheese," and his strategy involves asking "Do you give it up on the first date?" But would the Green Eyed Bandit's approach work in an environment that's more VH1 than BET? Check out highlights from his three-minute microdates and the bachelorettes' final verdicts. *Donnie Kwak*



> ELIZABETH, 33
Graphic designer

E: I like the color coordination you got going.

ES: 'Cause I'm a black guy with green eyes, I figured it would accent it more.

E: So it took a lot of consideration.

ES: Exactly. If you feel somebody, would it ever happen quick?

E: I'm not a ho.

ES: It's not about that. You could fall in love on the first date.

E: I agree.

THE VERDICT:

YES. I would have a drink with Erick again, because it was amazing conversation. He was more direct and sociable than the other guys. And he was dressed better.



> MORRISA, 35
Project manager

ES: Are you from here?

M: I'm from Brooklyn.

ES: Biggie Smalls! BK, holla!

M: [Giggles]

ES: What kind of music do you like?

M: Everything.

ES: You ever been in front a big, black dude like me?

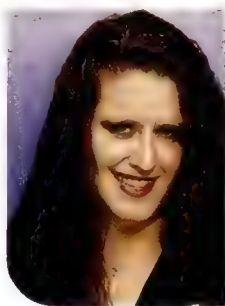
M: Yes, of course I have!

ES: My nickname is B.B.A. I represent the big, black, and ashy person. We extinct. So you are privileged, just like I'm privileged to be in front of you.

M: Okay, thank you!

THE VERDICT:

NO. He lied and said he was a construction worker. But he was fun to talk to, very charismatic.



> VIVIAN, 30
Marketing

ES: Do you take Vicodin?

V: No. Do you? I'm not judging.

ES: I'm, I'm.... I like the way it feels. Vicodin is a step lower than Ecstasy.

V: So...after how many dates do you give it up?

ES: Two months. I'm saving the flavor.

V: Mystery's sexy.

ES: I might eat the pussy, but I won't have the full sex thing.

V: I'm gonna put two stars next to your name. Three if we're hangin' later this week.

ES: [Points to back]

There's a room back there.

THE VERDICT:

YES. He's very personable, and he's a cutie.



> SHARI, 29
Administrative assistant

ES: You got your own place?

S: Yup, in Jersey.

ES: Independent. That's so attractive. How frequently do you go on dates?

S: Like two to three dates a week.

ES: Say you feelin' somebody and he feelin' you. How long....

S: I would say by maybe the second or third date.

ES: So you might hit it on the third date? That's hot!

S: I'm just being honest.

ES: That's so real though.

THE VERDICT:

YES. It was like a comedy show, he cracked me up. He was down to earth and he wasn't afraid to ask me things.



> ALLISON, 34
Psychologist

ES: What kind of music you like?

A: I like alternative rock. My favorite band is Matchbox 20.

ES: Oh, they're dope.

A: What kind of music do you listen to?

ES: Me? I like country—Clint Black, Charlie Daniels Band, anything old school.

A: Wow.

ES: Are you spontaneous?

A: Sometimes, but it's not a major part of my personality.

THE VERDICT:

NO. Physically, I didn't find myself attracted to him; intellectually, I don't think we're on the same level. He's a fun guy though.

> ERICK'S FINAL WORDS:

As far as convo, they was all nice people. I don't want to disrespect them, but they're not my type of women.



VIDEO MUSIC AWARDS

VIDEO MUSIC AWARDS SUNDAY

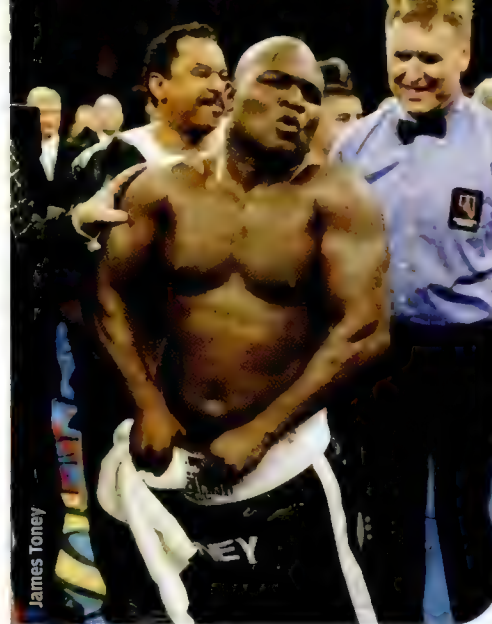
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Chin Check

VIBE asked **BERNARD HOPKINS** and **JAMES TONEY**—two champion boxers who don't give a what about a rapper—to fairly appraise hip hop's heavyweights' chances in the ring. Knuckle up, microphone masters!



> 50 Cent

BERNARD HOPKINS:

Here's a guy who's gonna hit you in your dick, your elbow, break all the rules to win. He's a power puncher, but I rap with my left and right—and if I put my upper cut in there, I'm going platinum, man.

JAMES TONEY: That's my nigga, I train to his music. But I'll still knock him out in one shot. I'm the world's most dangerous nigga. I'll hit him in the chin or with a body shot. It's over! But if he's fighting other rappers, I'd give him an A+.



> Jay-Z

BH: He'd use his charisma and lyrics as his boxing game—smooth, classy. But I don't see any power. You think he got big lips now? If Bernard Hopkins get him, his lips gonna look like a swarm of bees attacked him.

JT: His chin's too long. I heard he been working out in the gym, so he might have enough for punks like Roy Jones Jr. and them. But I'm on an entirely different level. I'll put him to sleep. He said it himself: "Lights out, baby!"



> Kanye West

BH: He's soft. He need a little of that DMX mentality, that back-in-the-day Public Enemy mentality. He need to keep his right hand up 'cause his chin look suspect. I love that he bounced back from the accident, and I respect him, but he soft.

JT: Kanye West makes preschool music. His rappin' is terrible. People hype his album too much—he's garbage. You saw his jaw was swole up. He ain't built for fighting. Stay in Chicago, and keep ya jaw straight.



> Eminem

BH: He got a lot of love in the African-American community, but I'll have him singing opera. I'd put something on him to remind him that no matter what, he's still a white boy. He'll change his hair from blond to black when I get through with him.

JT: My white nigga from Detroit, I'll knock him out, too. Yeah, I talk a lot of junk, but any one of these rappers wanna step to me, and I'll knock 'em back to the mike. Keep to dissin' ya mama.



> Lil' Kim:

BH: Lil' Kim gonna cheat. She gonna show you those breastless, her legs, her pink poodles and purple dogs, talk that nasty rap. But women get us every time—Samson and Delilah, man. Hopkins KO'd in the fifth.

JT: I wouldn't let my dog lick her, might catch something. I don't think she could scrap. She better keep doing what she doing, getting fake titties, fake lips. Foxy Brown is ghetto, she'd knock her out. Booom!

R.A. the Rugged Man

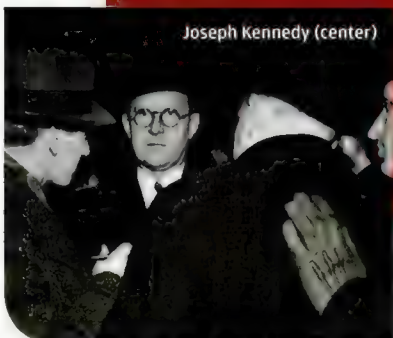
between the lines

"I'm just followin' the tradition of Joe Kennedy, bootleggin', ties with the mob and shit."—Shyne on "Quasi-OG," from Godfather Buried Alive

Follow Shyne's lead and trace the legacy of Joseph Kennedy, father of JFK. Joe allegedly built his fortune from insider trading and bootlegging alcohol during Prohibition. Then, in 1960, he supposedly leveraged his fortune and connections to help land JFK in the White House. "During the campaign, Jack joked that he didn't want his father buying more votes than necessary," says Professor Henry Graff, of Columbia University. For all his dodging of the law—documented or just alleged—it's amazing Joe never did time. Shyne? Well, that's another story.

Toshitaka Kondo

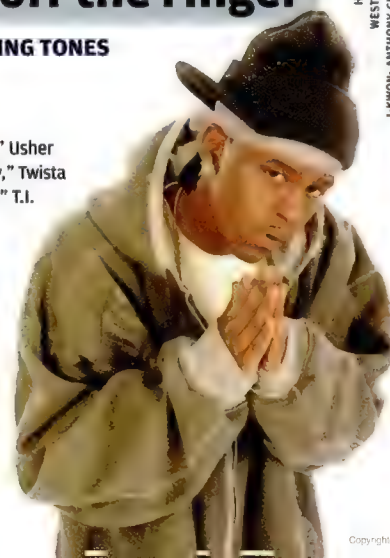
Joseph Kennedy (center)



> off the ringer

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- > "Rubber Band Man," T.I.
- > "Uncle F**ka," South Park
- > "Many Men (Wish Death)," 50 Cent
- > "Purple Pills," D12
- > "All Falls Down," Kanye West



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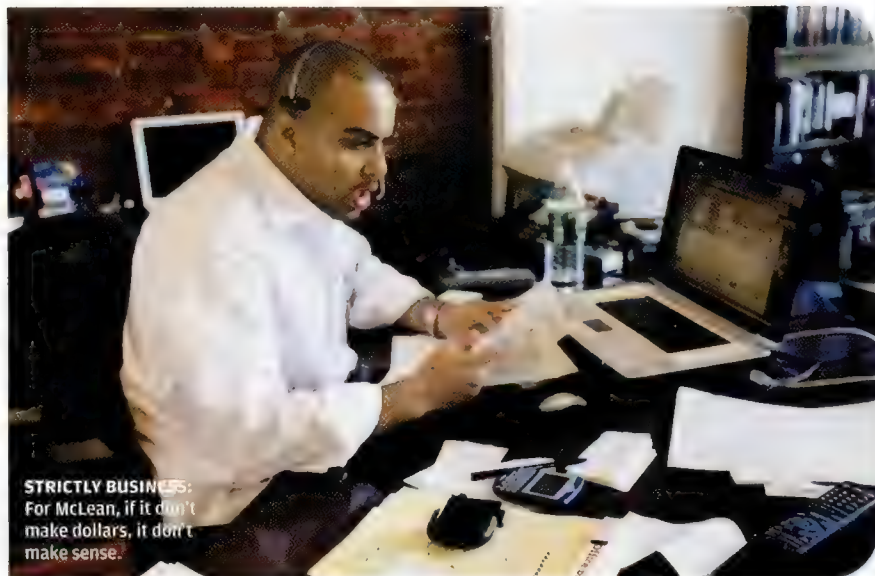
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Shot Callin'

Rene McLean, **CEO** of RPM, makes his own rules.

Rene McLean has made his name promoting other people's names. Starting as a Virgin Records intern at age 19, he bounced around the music industry in the early to mid-'90s, gaining an on-the-job education in sales, promotion, and management. In 1998, McLean, 35, founded RPM, a marketing company that deals with music, film, and other consumer products; partner Lylette Pizarro, 26, joined a year later. Top dogs like him can earn well over six figures, but this is no cushy job. RPM publishes *Emixshow* magazine and even manages artists like Kelis. Currently revving up for RPM's seventh annual Mixshow Power Summit—to be held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, from September 29 to October 2—CEO McLean keeps RPM diversified, constantly growing, and always promoting. Always promoting.



> MY RESPONSIBILITIES:

I'm pretty much hands-on with everything from marketing initiatives to radio promotions to the management side of things. It starts off with my partner, Lylette, and myself, and we send the work down the totem pole. If Miramax calls us up to work a movie, we find out what the movie is, what they're trying to do with it, and if it's something that makes sense for us to do. Or sometimes we strategize: Okay, we want to go after this client. Let's go pitch him this way.

> MY 9-TO-5:

I meet with Lylette between 9 and 10 in the morning to go over all the initiatives for the day. We figure out who needs to do what and then execute. After that, it's a barrage of phone calls, reaching out to people, running out to meetings, and going to the studio if I have to. It's just a lot of that, nothing glamorous. For me, work starts

the minute I wake up and ends the minute I go to bed. It's different when you're building your own company. It's a 24-hour thing.

> SKILLS NECESSARY:

You need to be able to communicate very well with people. When you're pitching to clients, you have to get that message across to them in a way they understand. You gotta be able to walk in there and make them feel comfortable so they trust you with their brand. Especially when it comes to this urban market, because corporate people don't always get it.

> THE WORST PART OF MY JOB:

There's just never enough time in the day to handle all the things I need to. But I can't complain; a lot of motherfuckers don't have what I have.

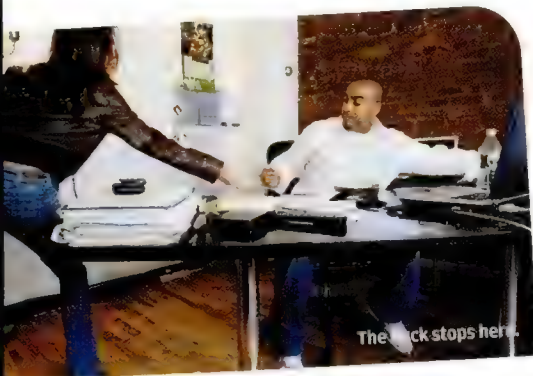
> WHAT MAKES IT ALL WORTHWHILE:

The freedom to control my own destiny. I'm not behind some desk working for somebody else. Or at some business getting shut down and I get the axe on the tree.

> ADVICE FOR ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS:

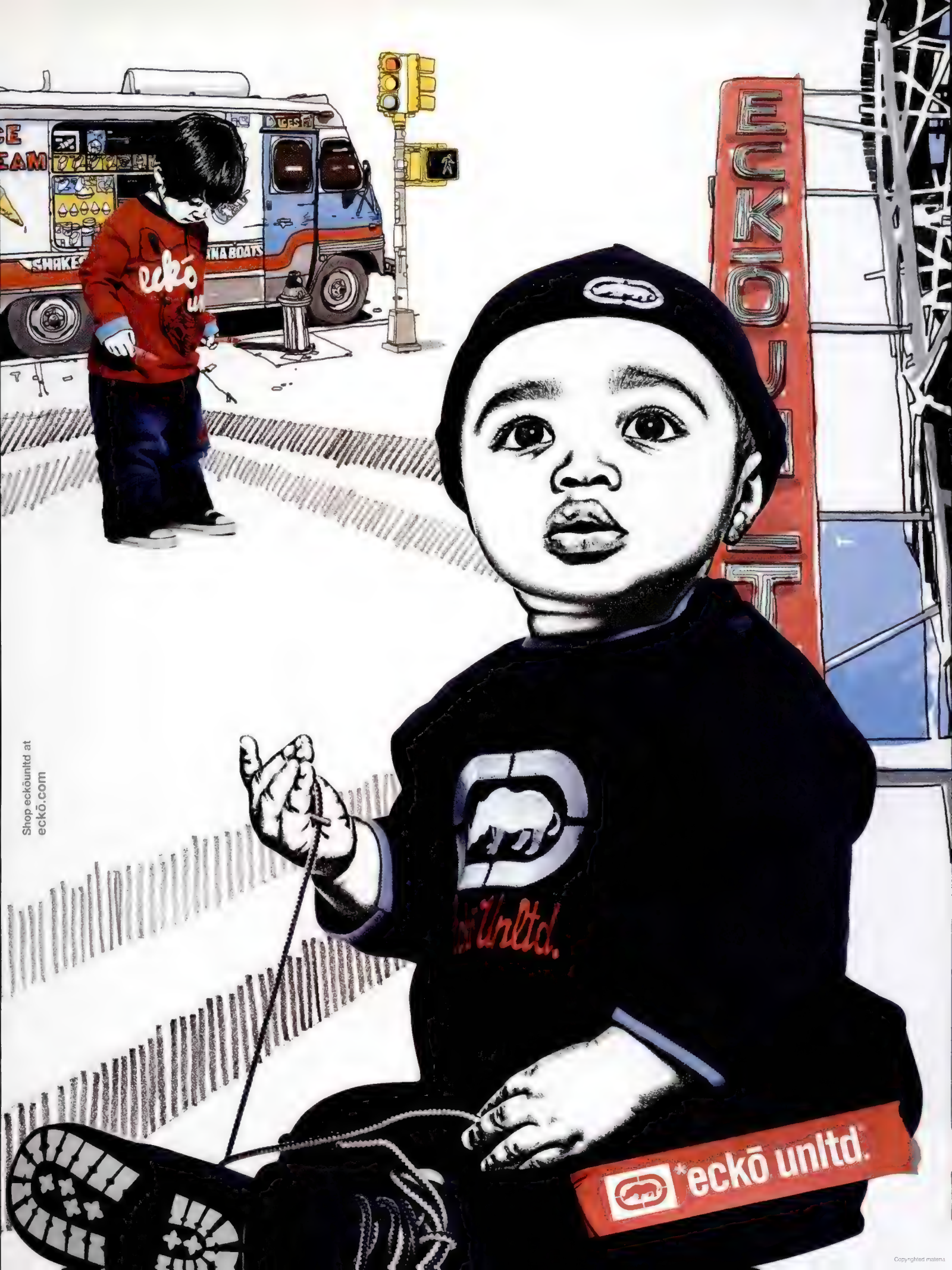
The thing about being in my position is that you gotta go make it happen for yourself. We're successful because we make ourselves successful. There's not a day that I can sit back and be like, I'm just gonna chill. Don't get me wrong, I can chill sometimes. But this is a business. This is a constant grind. It's the same process that Def Jam did to create a brand and become the Def Jam we know today.

Evan Waterman



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Bobbito plays the tracks. The **Beastie Boys** state the facts.

Most groups that record for a number of years have the ability to change with the times, but the Beasties change the times themselves. They're always on some next shit: I applauded the BK/N.Y. crew's humor early in their career, and totally supported their later conscientious efforts, particularly their work for Tibetan freedom. On the eve of the release of their sixth studio album, *To the 5 Boroughs*, I caught up with Mike D (the D stands for Diamond), 37, Adam "Adrock" Horowitz, 36, and Adam "MCA" Yauch, 39, and had a few laughs at the photo shoot. This kid drove by and asked, "Are you a new rap group?" Adrock responded, "Yeah. We're the Disco 3," even though there were four of us. The kid responded, "The graffiti look works for y'all. Cool! Luck!"

> TREACHEROUS THREE—*"Action"* (1983)

MD: The drums sound like Run-DMC's "Sucker M.C.'s," which was based on Orange Krush's "Action" beat. Larry Smith was behind both. **A:** I never had this record, but I love the Treacherous Three.

MD: They were one of the first hip hop shows we ever saw. Their hottest song was "The New Rap Language," with Spoonie Gee.

> MELTING POT—

"As I Lay Dying" (1971)
MD: Sounds like Rare Earth. The best shit was '72-'74, 'cause even rock groups would have funky breaks.

A: It's like how now all the rock groups want to be hip hop. Rock back then wanted to be funky, then disco.

MD: Rock-disco was a bad combination. I like this song 'cause the singer sounds like he's real thick.

A: There're no groups now that have chunky singers.

MCA: What about Blues Traveler?

MD: He's a big kid, but he's not funky.

> DEAD PREZ—

"Hell Yeah (Pimp the System)" (2004)

MD: The beat is straight "Set It Off" by Strafe. I loved their song about food called "Be Healthy," off their first LP.

A: *Be Healthy*, too. On this album they have a song about doing push-ups.

MCA: How do you write a whole song about doing push-ups?

A: It's important that politically minded groups like dead prez are around, especially with Bush in office.

> ROB SWIFT, FEAT. BOB JAMES AND D-STYLES—

"Salsa Scratch" (2002)

MD: I understand that scratching is what Rob Swift does so well, but if he gave me eight bars of just music, I would've been happy.

B: I would've never imagined a Latin-jazz record with cuts over it could be so melodic. I love it.



B-BOYS WILL BE BOYS: Bobbito and the Beasties—(from left) Mike D, MCA, and Adrock—don't stop the body party.

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Wack Juice

Ever since Redman spat, "I'm too hot, some say I got more juice than Tupac," on 1992's "Time 4 Sum Aksion," rappers from Lil' Kim to Beanie Sigel have used Shakur's breakthrough role as the jump-off for a simile. But frankly, few have done a good job. VIBE stacked more than 25 references to the film against each other, and crowned these five as the lowest in creativity and cleverness.



1. "The day all hell would break loose / Feel like I'm in the movie / Tupac when he was in Juice."—**BROTHA LYNCH HUNG**, from "Everywhere I Go," *Lynch by Inch: Suicide Note* (Siccmade, '03)
2. "EPMD, who's fuckin' with it / Outta control like Tupac in Juice / Character Bishop."—**ERICK SERMON**, from EPMD's "Rap Is Still Outta Control," *Out of Business* (Def Jam, '99)
3. "I got the juice / Like Bishop had with him / That just don't give a fuck, semi / Like O-Dog had wit' him / I'm sayin' prayers for my enemy."—**FABOLOUS**, from "Respect," *Street Dreams* (Desert Storm, '03)
4. "If it's trouble in the West / We'll bring back the juice with Bishop."—**QUASIMOTO**, from Peanut Butter Wolf's "Styles, Crews, Flows, Beats," *My Vinyl Weighs a Ton* (Stones Throw, '99)
5. "It's the imperial serial killer, alias Mussolini / Mentally unstable, juice status, so you can't see me."—**MUSSOLINI**, from 2Pac's "When We Ride," *All Eyez on Me* (Death Row, '96)

He's got an ear for jazz, funk, and R&B, but it was his unsparing eye that cinematographer/director Ernest R. Dickerson, 52, used to define hip hop cinema. His 1992 directorial debut, *Juice*, dealt honestly with street violence and introduced Tupac Shakur to the big screen. Dickerson's latest film, *Never Die Alone*, adapted from Donald Goines's gritty novel and starring DMX, was recently released on DVD.

My partner, Gerard Brown, and I wrote *Juice* in '81, nine years before anybody would touch our script. Studios thought it was too dark, that we should make it a comedy, but we wanted a raw, slice-of-life film about peer pressure and the preponderance of guns. We chose the title *Juice* because, at the time, that was the word for influence and power.

When *Juice* finally premiered, it was a lightning rod for controversy. The original movie poster shows all four guys, with Tupac in the foreground holding a gun to his chest. Paramount Pictures received complaints about the gun in the hands of a young black man, so about two days before the movie came out, all of the guns were airbrushed out. And this was while old white lady Estelle Getty

"When I did *Juice*, Tupac was just a dynamic young actor. He came in and blew the character off the page."

was pointing a gun right at you on the poster for *Stop! Or My Mom Will Shoot*. Paramount later stopped advertising *Juice* altogether when there was a shooting during a viewing in Philadelphia. But despite all the obstacles, it made \$18 million domestically and was an overwhelming success. Many people thanked me because they felt the film was a great tool for teaching kids about peer pressure.

I'm amazed that younger generations continue to watch *Juice*, but I guess that's attributable to the universal themes and Tupac's enduring power. When I did *Juice*, Tupac wasn't Tupac yet. He was just a dynamic young actor who came in and blew the character Bishop off the page.

Justin Monroe

Illustration by BRENT ROLLINS



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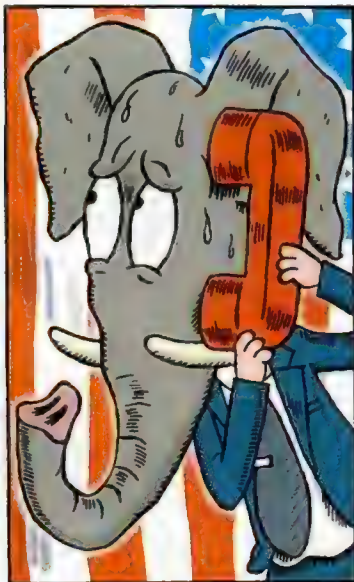
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series

NIKE GS

Politics as Usual?

VIBE calls the **CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS** of North Dakota's Republican Governor John Hoeven to see how the Pranksta can help rock the vote.



Hoeven Campaign Headquarters: Hoeven Committee.

VIBE: I'm the personal assistant for a local musician. He's looking to help out in Governor Hoeven's reelection campaign. Ohhhh.

His name is actually Lil B. He's a rapper from Bismarck. Little B? Like B-E-E or just B?

Just B. The B stands for Bismarck. Okay.

He had been a lifelong Democrat, but this year he decided to switch over to the Republican Party. He's a big fan of Governor Hoeven. He feels like he can really relate to the governor. He really wants to get on board. Now, what's he willing to do?

He's willing to do just about anything. Is he thinking, like, to entertain or help us by walking in parades? We're always needing people. In summertime, there are always parades around here, like the Fourth of July parade in Mandan.

He loves parades. He really loves parades. We'd like to meet him, if he'd like to stop by the office sometime. We'll give him a T-shirt and a few things.

One thing that he wants to help with is campaign commercials. Okay.

You think he could rap a little bit and Hoeven could just be there in the background? Well, I'll pass that along to my campaign manager. Some of our commercials have already been cut, and I don't know when the next ones will be. How old is B?

B just turned 22 last week. He's a young guy, but he really understands the importance of this election. And are you his friend?

I'm his personal assistant. I happened upon his tape one day. I'm into breaking new acts in the music industry. I want to put Bismarck, N.D., on the map. I've never heard about this young man. It would be interesting to hear some of his work.

Just turn on the radio. You'll hear him. He's getting spins on the Bismarck stations. Does he have any CDs out?

His CD will be out in a couple of months. We're shopping it around right now. He's gonna be huge. Especially if he could team up with the Republican Party in North Dakota—that's one of his priorities right now. Well, tell ya what. Have him stop by. We'd love to meet him. We'll get him decked out with a few Hoeven things, we always like to meet some of our volunteers, and we'll go from there.

the five laws of juice

Author Robert Greene narrows his 48 *Laws of Power* down to **FIVE RAP COMMANDMENTS**.

It doesn't take a social (or rocket) scientist to figure out why rap entrepreneurs like Ice Cube, Jay-Z, and Damon Dash are among the many who dig Robert Greene's best-selling book *The 48 Laws of Power* (Penguin). A how-to manual of survival in the game of life, the tome is an informative mix of philosophy, history, and pseudo-self-help-isms. Since most MCs don't have the time to read 430 pages, we asked Greene to select and comment on the power laws he finds most applicable to the rap game.



1 Law #6: COURT ATTENTION AT ALL COSTS

"This is what Puffy does. The idea is that there's no such thing as bad publicity, anyway you get your name in the limelight will help serve your ultimate goals."

2 Law #2: NEVER PUT TOO MUCH TRUST IN FRIENDS, LEARN HOW TO USE ENEMIES

"Is the rumor that Jay-Z could possibly be leaving Roc-A-Fella because of Damon? There must be something going on between them as friends. On the flip side, it's like the 50 Cent-Ja Rule thing, as far as enemies. It's always good to have an enemy you can play off."

3 Law #25: RE-CREATE YOURSELF

"This is the law of power that I consider the most important of all. And it's one that a lot of musicians violate. They don't change their image, they don't move with the times, which is the key to remaining relevant."

4 Law #16: USE ABSENCE TO INCREASE RESPECT AND HONOR

"I think Jay-Z uses that a little bit because he's saying this is gonna be his last record. This notion that he might disappear drives people crazy."

5 Law #47: DO NOT GO PAST THE MARK YOU AIMED FOR; IN VICTORY, LEARN WHEN TO STOP

"It's kind of like what Ice Cube did in moving on to acting. But usually, entertainers have a real bad problem with this. Success goes to their head, they think they have the magic formula, and just repeat it over and over. And that gets stale." *Amy Linden*



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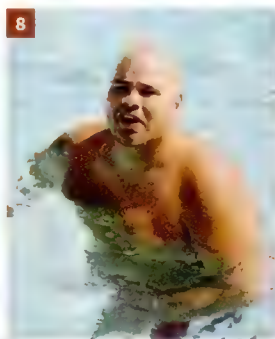
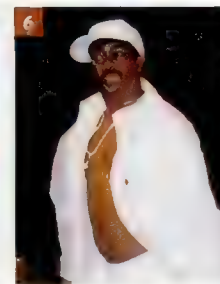
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Remember the Time

1. So a reverend, a white rapper, and a mogul walk into a bar.... **REVEREND RUN**, **EMINEM**, and **RUSSELL SIMMONS** rub elbows at the Detroit Hip-Hop Summit.

2. Bad Boys **LOON** and **MARIO WINANS** show **ELLEN DEGENERES** the love below.

3. Frontin': Seems like **KELIS** got a mouthful of gold teeth at the Glamour Women of the Year Awards in London.

4. "Isn't our model gorgeous?" **KIMORA LEE SIMMONS** is feelin' herself at the Baby Phat sneaker launch party in the Hamptons.

5. Get Carter! The paparazzi catch a cranky **JAY-Z** leaving the Baby Phat Olympus Fashion Week 2004 show in N.Y.C.

6. "What do you mean, close my shirt?" **KURTIS BLOW** lets it all hang out at S.O.B.'s in N.Y.C.

7. Me, myself, and I: **BEYONCÉ** bumps jelly with her wax replica at Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum in New York City.

8. Where'd e'rybody go? **FAT JOE'S** cannonball drop clears the pool at his Memorial Day party in Miami.

9. Ghetto twinz: **BIG TIGGER** (left) shares a laugh with look-alike **CAM'RON** at a celebrity basketball game in Miami.

10. Crunk-afarian? **LIL JON** pickets for peace at an Elephant Man show at N.Y.C.'s Hammerstein Ballroom.

11. P.Diddyus, God of Fame: **DIDDY** exalts after carrying the Olympic Torch through Queens.

12. Daddy's little girl: **LUDACRIS** carries daughter **KARMA** around his "Diamond in the Back" video shoot in Atlanta.

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The best thing about summer? The mental clarity that comes in rivulets when, perhaps, you resist the allure of frivolous air conditioning and choose instead to marinate in a salt mixture of your own making. **VC** is hot and bothered and loving it. So we ask you, dear readers: If Ben Stiller can bring *DodgeBall* to the big screen, when will Dave Chappelle do "Skelly: The Motion Picture"? Or maybe "Spades," starring B2K (minus two, plus one)? **VC** is copyrighting both ideas. And who said heat exhaustion stops production?... For a guy who's retired, it sure seems like **Jay-Z** is aching to get back to work. Insiders have whispered that the legendary microphone fiend is struggling to cope with his jones, what with another mixtape ("Oh, but it's just for his latest Reebok sneaker"); supposedly offering to do a concert with R. Kelly ("But only if he can get a shitload of

moola"); and now **VC** hears that he's even discussing making "The Best of Both Worlds, Part 3" with that alleged child pornograph-

er. Retirement is great, ain't it?... **VC** spotted **Eve** on a shopping spree, but the tremendous Louis Vuitton tab was likely being sent to her new boyfriend, who we hear just happens to be the son of an African dictator. While pops is not the most popular fellow, the son is the new toast of the baller/shot-caller scene, with a weakness for hip hop divas.... **VC** is noticing that celebs have their own way of fighting summer heat. **Remy Ma**, **Paris Hilton**, and **Lil' Kim** have all been spied in teeny-tiny mini-skirts, apparently sans panties, prompting **VC** to ask, Why would VIPs treat their "very intimate privates" like general admission? But remember, all this is very hush-hush and strictly on the QT.



Jay-Z



R. Kelly

WHO DID WHAT WHERE & WHEN

> ya heard?

**FREEK-A-LEEK?** Kobe takes his moves to the other court.**THREE-PEAT:** J.Lo goes to the altar and ties the knot, again.**UNLEASHED:** Snoop Dogg files for divorce from wifey.

ANNOUNCING

> On May 11, **Kobe Bryant**, 26, pleaded not guilty in an Eagle, Colo., courtroom to felony sexual assault. The Lakers guard stands accused of raping a then 19-year-old woman last June at a hotel in Edwards, Colo. If convicted, Bryant faces four years to life in prison. The trial has been set for August 27.

> On May 18, a Los Angeles jury ordered **Death Row Records** to pay \$162,000 damages to Dwayne H. Baudy for a November 2001 attack at L.A.-area Con Am Studios. Baudy, who now walks with a cane due to injuries from the beating, claimed he got into an unprovoked confrontation with Reginald Wright Jr., Death Row's security chief, while visiting the studio to meet with a producer. Despite the fine, Wright and Death Row owner Marion "Suge" Knight were both cleared of any criminal wrongdoing.

> **Michael Jackson's** child molestation trial is tentatively set to begin on September 13 in Santa Maria, Calif. The King of Pop will face 10 felony charges, including committing a lewd act and administering intoxicating agents to a minor. Jackson's lawyers contend that the trial date is too soon for them to prepare their client's defense.

FREE

> G Unit's **Tony Yayo** was released from a federal prison in New York on May 24 after serving more than four months for possession of a forged passport. The Queens-based MC had been in custody since January 9, when,

only a day after he had finished serving 10 months for jumping bail, his parole officer discovered the fake document during a routine check of his identification papers.

MARRIED

> On June 5, **Jennifer Lopez**, 34, wed **Marc Anthony**, 34, in a small ceremony in Beverly Hills, Calif. Anthony had been divorced from his wife of four years for less than a week before the nuptials. This is Lopez's third marriage.

SPLIT

> Citing irreconcilable differences, **Snoop Dogg**, aka Calvin Broadus, filed for divorce from Shante, his wife of seven years, in Los Angeles Superior Court on May 21. Broadus seeks joint custody of their three children, Corde, 9, Cordell, 7, and Cori, 4.

Reporting by Alex Woodson

power picks

BABY'S

Top 5 Places to Stay Juiced

- > Car lots, to keep my fleet updated.
- > Jewelry stores, 'cause each new piece must outdo the last.
- > The 'hood, to give back to the community.
- > The clubs, to check out new trends.
- > The bank, for big deposits—no withdrawals.



JAY-Z: LAURA FAIR/ZUMA/CORBIS; R. KELLY: KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE; BRYANT: THOMAS COOPER/GETTY IMAGES; LOPEZ: JAMES DEVANEY/WIREIMAGE; SNOOP DOGG: BABY: JONATHAN MANNION



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THUG COOKOUT

► **UNSESSED**

Just because he's a grimy rapper doesn't mean **TRICK DADDY** can't throw down in the kitchen.

Trick Daddy (aka Maurice Young) may not be the first name to come to mind when you think of gourmet chefs, but that's because you don't know "nann" about his culinary skills. "I never remembered a time when I couldn't cook," says the 29-year-old Miami MC. He began (CONTINUED ON PAGE 114)



PHOTOGRAPH BY KARE KASTORE

fiddling in the kitchen at the age of 6 and gradually sharpened his techniques through trial and error. "If I messed up, I would try it again," he says. "Then it got to the point where I could cook by eye."

Trick learned to burn on his own—his first entrée was a grilled-cheese "sammich"—and admits that his mother "can't cook too good." ("She knows I'm the real deal," he says laughing.) So, as a kid, he would often prepare meals for his 10 siblings. "We had it hard growing up in the projects," he says.

Now, the ghetto gourmand boasts expertise in macaroni and cheese, conch fritters, jerk chicken, pork chops, collard greens, corn bread, and most of all, baby back ribs. "I put the ribs in my secret 'T Double D' sauce and let them marinate about 30 to 45 minutes, then I get them on my big smoker and handle my business," he says. "They don't need no barbecue sauce. And it's a must that you lick your fingers when you get through eating my baby backs."

If the thought of those succulent ribs has your mouth watering, don't fret. A restaurant—T Double D's Chicken and Waffles—may be in the works soon. Indeed, Trick Daddy loves food almost as much as he loves the kids. "I like to see others eating real good. So cooking is what I do." Chow down to a chef that's better than you.

Saptosa Foster

Big Eats

Trick Daddy's favorite restaurants.

► **SHAKER'S CONCH HOUSE** *Mian*
Picks: Fried shrimp, conch, and rice with a side of macaroni and cheese

► **PAPPADEAUX SEAFOOD**
Picks: Crab legs or fingers and shrimp

► **GLADYS KNIGHT & RON WINAN'S CHICKEN & Waffles**

Picks: Waffles and chicken wings with a side of cheese grits, and cheese eggs scrambled light *S.F.*

St. Louis



The Gateway City is the new hotbed for young, fresh hip hop. Check out our guide to the spirit of STL.



MCS D-Mac (left): Rhyme vet who spits rough lyrics.
Luqman: Gutter MC with skills behind the boards.
Ruka Puff: Aggressive, oversize rapper, à la Bone Crusher.
First Draft: Young upstarts; like a grittier version of the St. Lunatics.



SPOTS The Pink Slip, aka The Slip: Didn't get lucky in the club? You will here.

Soft Touch: In-your-face dancers are your private video honeys to look at and touch.

The Cheesecake Factory: Besides the best desserts beneath the Arch, they also cook up some fine chicken and biscuits.

RECORD STORES Vintage Vinyl (right): University City shop offers chart-toppers along with off-the-radar hits.
Sound Revolution: The spot for TRL-ers and rock 'n' roll heads.



RADIO J-Nicks's The Derry Show on **Q95.5 FM** dominates St. Louie's airwaves from 6 to 10 p.m. weekdays with commercial hits from Kanye West, Usher, and hometown faves J-Kwon and Chingy.



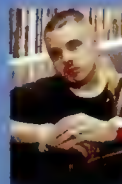
STYLE The locals keep pace with every trend, from button-ups to blazers. The latest garb can be found at **Lark** at the Westfield Northwest Shoppingtown.

DJS Charlie Chan Soprano (right): The Don of St. Louis DJS
DJ Smitty: Diverse scratch-and-spinner
DJ Standaman: Turntablist with well-rounded DJ ability



PRODUCERS Trackboyz: Hitmakers who made J-Kwon's "Tippy."

Track Starz: Zo and Sham led Chingy to stardom with "Right Thurr."
Jay-E (right): Leader of the Basement Beats team behind Nelly's albums.



CULTURE Legacy Books and Café (left) plays host to spoken-word acts like **Queen Isis Jones**. **Da Wax Murderaz**, an eight-DJ crew, features some of the Midwest's illest turntable talent.

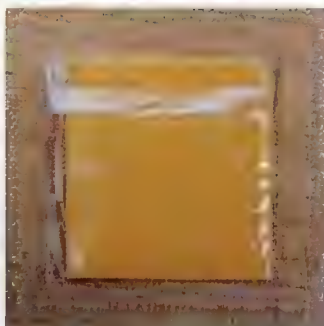
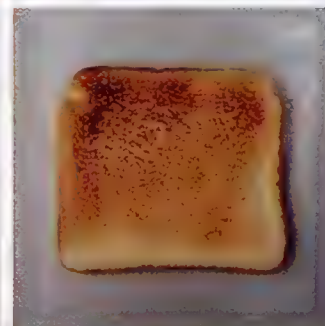
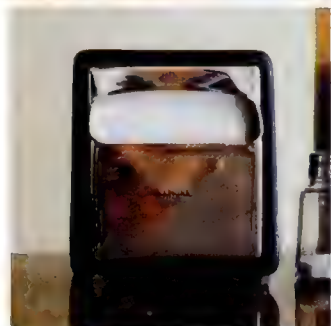
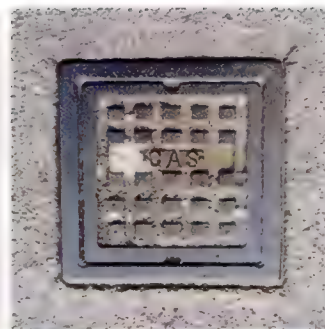


CLUBS Club Isis (above): The real hip hop is here on Friday nights.

The Monastery: Doors at this crunk East St. Louis spot don't close till seven in the morning...or until you get decked.
Seven: Boogie heads groove to the latest Erykah Badu while sipping martinis.

Reporting by Jesús Triviño





Drivers wanted. 

BROWN SUGAR

Fresh off her Tony-nominated performance in *A Raisin in the Sun*, the stunning **SANAA LATHAN**, 32, blasts off in the summer blockbuster *Alien vs. Predator*. Here she talks about toting gats and getting her weight up.



SHE AIN'T PLAYIN': Lathan is icy hot.

To go from filming *Alien vs. Predator* to Broadway must have been quite a shift.

It really was. But it's actually been refreshing to go from saving the world to playing a 20-year-old college student in the 1950s.

You put on weight for HBO's *Disappearing Acts*, and you learned to play ball for *Love & Basketball*.

Did you do anything to prepare for intergalactic warfare?

I actually practiced shooting guns. That big one...what was it...a Desert Eagle? Whew! That was no joke. But I got real good at shooting it, to the point where I could just do it with one hand and not really flinch.

So you got your gangsta up.

[Laughs] Yeah, and I had to work out, too, because it was one of the most grueling shoots of my life. I've done a lot of dramas, but here I'm fighting for my life. So it's not just about looking good, it's about being able to sprint up and down take after take without getting hurt.

So is this your superdiesel, Linda Hamilton-in-*Terminator 2: Judgement Day* role?

No, I didn't get buff like that [laughs]. I didn't have time to. I had actually just come back to L.A. from doing press for *Out of Time*, and literally, the next day, they asked me to a last-minute audition to read for the part. A week later, I was in

Prague shooting the film.

I'm sure you've had crazy fan experiences, but are you ready for all the sci-fi geeks?

I'm not the type of actress who got in it for the fame. Even now, it trips me out when people are like, "Can I have your autograph?" So no, I don't think I'm ready.

Benjamin Meadows-Ingram

THE HIT LIST

> DVDS Uma Thurman slices her way to the top in *Kill Bill: Vol. 2*. Meanwhile, *Soul Plane*, starring Kevin Hart, Snoop Dogg, and damn near everybody else, just goes over the top.



> FLIX Looking for one last BBQ? Queen Latifah serves up *The Cookout* (September 3), a "there goes the neighborhood" comedy costarring Tim Meadows and Meagan Good. Bernie Mac swings for the fences in Touchstone's *Mr. 3000* (September 24).

> BOOKS Carolyn Cooper gets to the roots of the riddim in *Sound Clash: Jamaican Dancehall From Lady Saw to Dancehall Queen*. Or select *And It Don't Stop*, a collection of the best writing on hip hop, edited by Raquel Cepeda.

> GAMES Holding a grudge? Take it to the gridiron in *Madden NFL 2005* (EA Sports), or grab the iron, bottle, or whatever you can find in *Def Jam Fight for NY* (EA Games). More productive types can polish their inner track master with *MTV Music Generator 3* (Codemasters).

B.M.I.

Bustin' heads in *Def Jam Fight for NY*.



KICK-ASS CHICKS

VIBE readers' baddest female roles, according to our online poll.

1. **CLEO SIMS** in *Set It Off* (1996): Queen Latifah licks off.
2. **FOXY BROWN** in *Foxy Brown* (1974): Pam Grier whups ass.
3. **THE BRIDE** in *Kill Bill: Vols. 1 & 2* (2003/04): Uma Thurman sticks it to the man.
4. **JEN YU** in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000): Ziyi Zhang soars.
5. **LOUISE** in *Thelma & Louise* (1991): Susan Sarandon strikes back.



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Lisa Raye

INDEX

Chi-town's own shapely diva takes a break from her full-time mommy duties to chit chat with *All of Us*.



- ▲ Sexiest industry moms:**
- Angelina Jolie
 - Iman
 - Sheryl Lee Ralph

- ▼ The hottest designer shades are by...**
- Oliver Peoples
 - Christian Dior
 - Bulgari ("I'm not a label person, but I am a sunglasses kind of chick!")



- ◀ Favorite books of all time:**
- *Addicted*, by Zane
 - *The Sex Chronicles*, by Zane
 - *The Da Vinci Code*, by Dan Brown

- > Movie roles I turned down:**
- *Shaft* ("That's it, I ain't in no position to turn down shit!")



- > You'd never guess, but I still have...**
- Pajama parties with my girls
 - My favorite pillow ("I've had it for 37 years, and I've bent all the corners.")



- ◀ Most underrated sexy male actors:**
- Larenz Tate
 - Terrence Dashon Howard ("He's fucking incredible!")

- > I always get cravings for...**
- Tortilla chips with hot salsa
 - Ruffles potato chips with french-onion dip
 - Penny candy



- ◀ Movies with the sexiest love scenes:**
- *9 1/2 Weeks*
 - *Indecent Proposal*
 - *Set It Off*

- > Favorite fragrances:**
- Angelfire, by Mary Kay
 - Bora Bora, by Liz Claiborne
 - L'Eau d'Issey, by Issey Miyake



- ◀ The cutest celebrity couples:**
- Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith
 - Ashton Kutcher and Demi Moore
 - Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew Broderick ("I love them!")



- ◀ I'm always mistaken for:**
- Raven-Symone
 - Alicia Keys



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CHOSEN ONE

Cleveland Browns rookie **KELLEN WINSLOW II** could revolutionize his position—just like his Hall of Fame father.

"I THINK
I'LL BE
MORE LIKE
VIN DIESEL."

ALL-STAR

He's a tight end with a Tony Gonzalez body (6'4", 243 pounds) and the athleticism of a wide receiver like Randy Moss (4.55 seconds in the 40-yard dash). Combine that with All-Pro bloodlines (his father is San Diego Chargers legend Kellen Winslow Sr.) and an endorsement-ready nickname (K2), and it seems inevitable that Kellen Winslow II will be a superstar. After earning the John Mackey Award as the nation's top college tight end in 2003, Winslow left the University of Miami after his junior season. The Cleveland Browns selected the 21-year-old as the sixth pick in April's NFL draft, the highest spot for a TE in more than 20 years. Get ready for Y-K2.

BIG SHOES TO FILL Winslow encourages comparisons to his famed pa, though Junior's quick to point out the differences in their games. "My dad was smooth and fluid," says K2. "I'm much more athletic." As a Brown, Winslow will follow in the footsteps of another Hall of Famer, former Cleveland great Ozzie Newsome, now general manager of division rival the Baltimore Ravens. "With his desire to be great, I think he can live up to the potential," says Newsome.

WAR GAMES Winslow took a lot of flak for likening football to war and calling himself a soldier in an emotional outburst after a loss last November. Though he later apologized, Winslow remains a fiercely intense competitor. "I'm a perfectionist, I want to be the best at everything."

PHONE TAG "Hi, you've reached K2, leave a message.... Sorry, that mailbox is full." He's had the same wireless number since high school, and he's not about to change it now. Yet the more he blows up, the more it blows up. The constant ringing—a hundred times or more a day since the draft—is driving him crazy. "I ain't even been checking my messages lately," says Winslow.

FAST AND FURIOUS? An aspiring actor, Winslow is currently looking for a Los Angeles condo, where he will reside in the off-season to take drama lessons. But don't think Morris Chestnut; Winslow is no fan of the romantic comedy. "I'm interested in action movies," he explains. "I think I'll be more like Vin Diesel." *Robyn Marks*

CLEVELAND
BROWN:
K2 can bench-
press 340
pounds.



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LEAN BACK:
Shawna is
red hot.



DEEP FRIED

1, 2 Harold's Chicken #18, 89th Street

It's a lil' dinky hole-in-the-wall. They take your order behind bulletproof glass, and you slip them the dough. The fried chicken is just the best. I had I-20 from DTP come here with me, and he was like, "Whatever, chicken is chicken." Man, after he ate, that fool called me talking 'bout, "Next time we in town, you gotta take me back to that chicken joint!"

STEPPIN' OUT



WHERE I'M FROM

The rappin' daughter of Chicago blues legend Buddy Guy, DTP's **SHAWNNA** reveals her favorite Windy City spots.



THE SCIENCE

3 Biology Bar, N. Fremont Street

Friday night is the best night to go, when WGCI 107.5 FM DJ Mike Love spins. It's crazy, because I get strong-armed at the door when I'm not with Ludacris. Man, it be jukin'—overpacked, but cool. It's mostly hip hop, but you know you can't be in Chicago and not play a lil' house music. I'll bop and do a lil' groove, but you ain't gonna catch me slaving and sweaty out there.

SHOPPERS' ROW

4 Magnificent Mile, N. Michigan Avenue

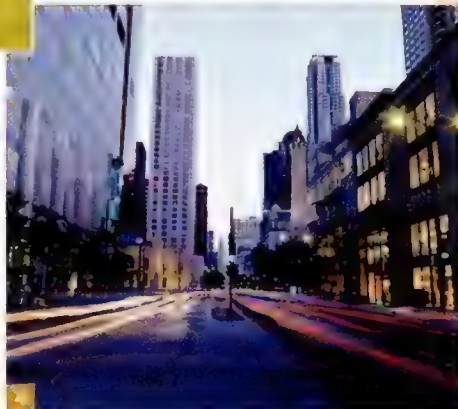
You can find all the high-end designers like Gucci and Louis Vuitton. And if you want the best clothes for your baby that you'll never see on another lil' baby, go here. But you better have some real change, because that mile is *magnificent*. When you got it like that, splurge!



WAX OFF

5 Mario Tricoci Hair Salon & Day Spa, Orland Park

What's hot is that it's secluded, so everyone isn't staring at you. The Polish ladies go the whole nine yards with the pedicures. They bring you this fruit juice they mix on their own. I also get a body scrub, warm stone massage, and the one wax that everyone is afraid of. I wear revealing outfits, and I have to come correct! *Kenya N. Byrd*



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Authentic

ACCESS TO THE SHOW

Fresh to Def

You got your style down. Now it's time for a remix. Here are four distinct looks to **LIVEN UP YOUR WARDROBE**.

GEAR



1



2



3



4

Everybody has personal style, but variety is the key to keeping it fresh. Don't be afraid to mix it up! Floss in a matching velour sweat suit, and get mistaken for a player in a Gucci shearling. Impress your date in all black, and throw on a knitted sweater over layered collar shirts for that ubiquitous collegiate look. Remember, fellas: Change is good!

Rajni Lucienne Jacques

1. SUPERFLY

Shearling coat, \$3,490, wool turtleneck, \$490, wool V-neck, \$480, pants, \$645, loafers with tassels, \$895, all by **Gucci**; bucket cap, \$150, by **Stetson**.

2. SPORTY BALLER

Hoodie, \$74.50, and jeans, \$78.50, both by **G Unit Clothing Company**; cashmere silk scarf, \$90, by **Helmut Lang**; boots, \$145, by **Timberland**.

3. CASUAL MACK

Navy jacket, \$895, and corduroy pants, \$295, both by **Pringle of Scotland**; velvet sport coat, \$250, by **Claiborne**; collar shirt, \$249, by **Helmut Lang**; trucker cap, \$75, by **Y-3**; tie, \$39.50, by **Fubu Tie Collection**; "J12" watch, \$8,900, by **Chanel**; gold diamond ring, \$8,600, and bracelet, \$400, both by **Stephen Webster**; sneakers, \$280, by **Dolce & Gabbana**.

4. URBAN PREPPY

Zip-up sweater, \$495, by **Evisu**; light blue polo, \$45, and navy polo, \$59.50, both by **Marc Ecko Collection**; jeans, \$78, by **Rocawear**; flocked denim fitted, \$40, by **New Era 59Fifty**; sneakers, \$125, by **Nike**.

See THE DETAILS, page 242.

Photographs by **EFFI COHEN**



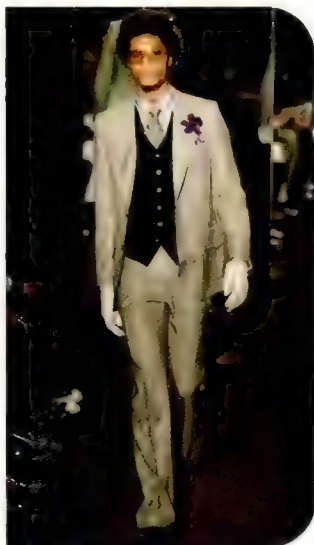
JLO BY JENNIFER LOPEZ

LEGENDS OF THE FALL

Here's a roundup of the season's new lines from our favorite designers.



PERRY ELLIS With shearling flight jackets and cotton Lycra corduroys, Patrick Robinson's fall collection could have been plucked from the 1920s.



YVES SAINT LAURENT RIVE GAUCHE Tom Ford's final collection—tailored suits, creased pants, and starch-ridden lapels—deserves a pimp-cup salute.



CUT & SEW Following the hot look of the season, Marc Ecko goes "nerd chic" with creased trousers and loose-fitting blazers.



YOHJI YAMAMOTO Inspired by the "rockabilly" style, Yohji's leather biker jackets would be perfect for an urban version of Grease.



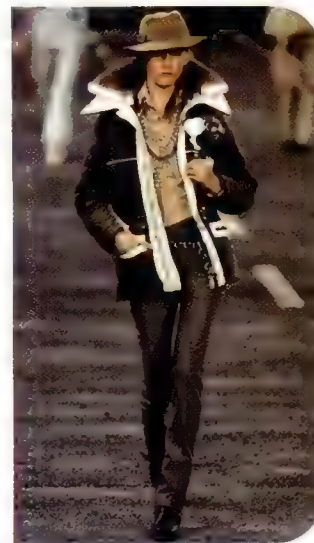
GUCCI With form-fitting dresses as well as jackets, Tom Ford accentuates every curve of the female figure.



KENNETH COLE From the diva-worthy, high-collared yellow coat to the sexy, skinny pants, Kenneth Cole is the perfect mix of classic cool.



CHRISTIAN DIOR More like art than fashion items, John Galliano's designs include a fluorescent chiffon dress with bright yellow fur trim.



CHANEL Rugged but chic, Chanel takes it back to when we rocked thick gold chains and fur-collared bombers. *Rajni Lucienne Jacques*

Final Touch

Use these accessories to complete your look.



< Key chain, \$138, by Prada



< Velcro sneakers, \$135, by Umbro by Kim Jones



< Gold buckle belt, \$295, by YSL Rive Gauche

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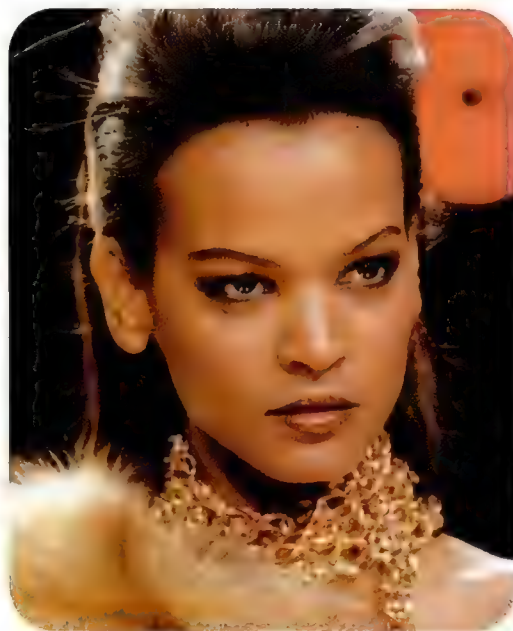
OVER THE TOP Not for the shy, this bold visage emphasizes your eyes and lips:

- Put on a layer of shadow from your lashes to the brows. Add eye gloss on top. Don't forget to line your lids with liquid mascara.
- Add color beneath your eyelids for an even more dramatic effect.
- Match a lipstick (try **M.A.C Lipglass Lip Gloss**) with your eye makeup to complete the look.



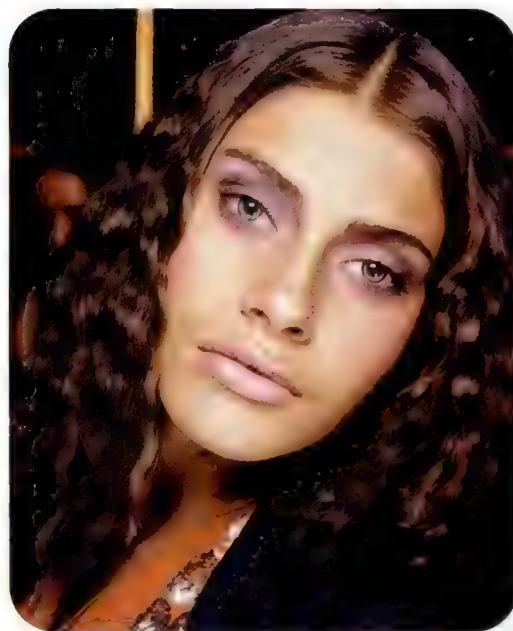
LESS IS MORE If you're more comfortable with a natural look, here's how to work it:

- Apply a light foundation that matches your skin tone, such as **Bobbi Brown's Sheer Finish Loose Powder**.
- Line your eyes with **Nars Eyeliner** (right) in **Black Moon** to enhance definition. Top it off with **Bourjois' Extra Lengthening Longueur Sublime** mascara.
- Lips should stay a shade of pink. The trick is to line them with a pencil and then apply a clear gloss.



ON THE TOWN Smoky eyes and berry-stained lips are a deadly combination for seduction:

- Use bronzer to achieve a sexy look. Try **Yves Saint Laurent Bronzing powder** in #3 **Spicy Radiance**.
- For an even tone on any skin color, lightly apply **black'Up Iridescent Powder** in #5 with a thick bristled foundation brush.
- To achieve a sensual lips look, use a thin brush to apply **Guerlain's KissKiss Gloss** (right) in **Rouge Passion**.



WEEKEND GLAMOUR For your busy day, you need a long-lasting no-fuss look:

- Accentuate your bone structure by dabbing a sheer cream highlighter on your forehead and cheekbones. **Wet 'N' Wild's MegaGlo Face Illuminator** works well.
- Add a little color from the highlighter to your eyelids; apply a pink/silver shadow to complement your skin.



Rajni Lucienne Jacques



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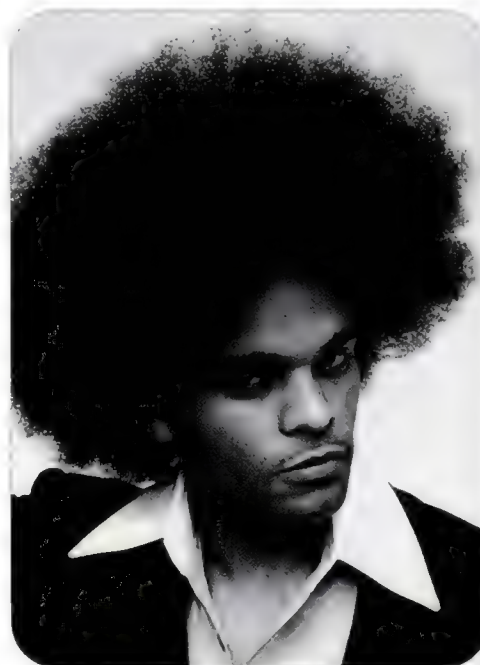
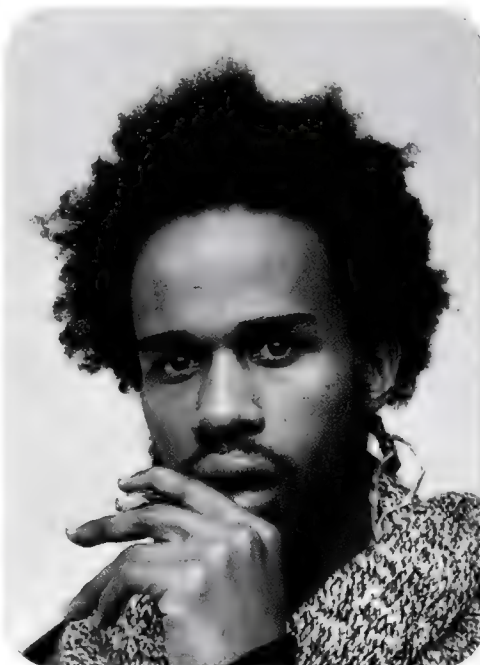
Afro Picks



Diggin' the 'fro?
Switch up your style
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different ways.

More than just a hairstyle, the Afro represents an era and stands as a symbol of unity and power. Whether you're wearing it nappy, blown out, dreadled at the ends, parted, pushed back, or in loose, bouncy curls, you can't deny its natural loveliness.
For product information, see THE DETAILS, page 242.

Rajni Lucienne Jacques



STYLING BY JOHN MOORE; MAKEUP BY MITU FOR MARY QUANT AT JUMP; HAIR BY D-ROCK FOR BUMBLE + BUMBLE AT JUMP; (TOP ROW, FROM LEFT) SWEATER AND BUTTON-DOWN SHIRT, BOTH BY H BY TOMMY HILFBER; JACKET BY Y-3; SCARF BY VICTORINOX BY SWISS ARMY BRANDS; BLAZER AND COLLAR SHIRT, BOTH BY Y-3; RIVE GAUCHE; (BOTTOM ROW, FROM LEFT) T-SHIRT BY G UNIT CLOTHING COMPANY; HOODED SWEATSHIRT AND V-NECK SWEATER, BOTH BY UMBRO BY KIM JONES; COAT BY MICHAEL KORS; ZIP-UP CARDIGAN AND COLLAR SHIRT, BOTH BY ECCO UNLTD.

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SMOOTH DUDES

V FACE These days, men maintain **GROOMING REGIMENS** that include products from soothing body washes to enticing colognes. Here are a few items some male celebs swear by.



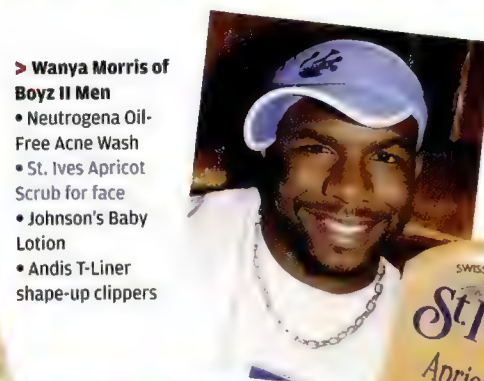
- < Cee-Lo**
- Shea Butter Cream by African Shea Butter Co.
 - Natural Beeswax Skin Cream
 - Dove soap
 - Gucci For Men cologne



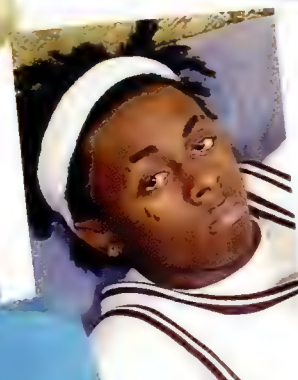
- < Murphy Lee of the St. Lunatics**
- African Black soap
 - Tom's of Maine Natural Fluoride-Free toothpaste
 - Chrome by Loris Azzaro cologne
 - Palmer's Cocoa Butter Formula



- ▲ Havoc of Mobb Deep**
- Neutrogena Men Skin Clearing Shave Cream
 - Tend Skin After-shave Solution
 - Neutrogena Pore Refining Cleanser
 - Natural Life Vitamin E Oil (for face and neck)



- > Wanya Morris of Boyz II Men**
- Neutrogena Oil-Free Acne Wash
 - St. Ives Apricot Scrub for face
 - Johnson's Baby Lotion
 - Andis T-Liner shape-up clippers



- ▲ Lil' Wayne**
- Dial Antibacterial Deodorant soap
 - Listerine Cool Mint Antiseptic mouthwash
 - Palmer's Cocoa Butter Formula
 - Pasha De Cartier by Cartier cologne

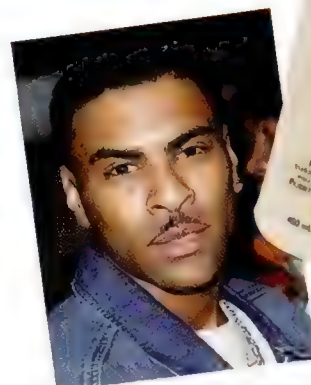
> Pitbull

- 1800 Aftershave
- D&G Masculine by Dolce and Gabbana
- Q-Tips cotton swabs
- ChapStick



> Ginuwine

- Andis T-Outliner Trimmer
- Pantene Pro-V shampoo
- Fahrenheit O Degree by Christian Dior cologne
- Crest Fresh Citrus Breeze toothpaste



> Eamon

- Neutrogena Men Skin Clearing Shave Cream
 - Mania by Giorgio Armani cologne
 - Tend Skin After-shave Solution
 - Triaz facial wash and cream
- Rajni Lucienne Jacques



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310
MOTORING





STILL STANDING



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> Citizen Cope Something Like a Phenomenon

Clarence Greenwood, aka Citizen Cope, makes music that feeds your soul. And tonight at Sin-é in downtown New York City, an eclectic mix of folks is starved for his delicious blend of blues, folk, classic rock, soul, reggae, and hip hop. As Cope performs songs from his upcoming album, *The Clarence Greenwood Recordings*, thugs, rastas, hipsters, and crunchy-granola types are all mesmerized by the haunting melodies, provocative lyrics, and gritty, blue-collar appeal of this Memphis-born, D.C.-raised singer/songwriter.

It wasn't always clear to Cope that he was destined to make music. Now in his early 30s, he started playing the guitar at 13, but didn't commit to his profession until his 20s. "It was a really slow process," he says of the realization that this was his calling. "Music is so mystical, you feel like the people doing it have this anointed thing. But when you have an aptitude for something, it doesn't really fight you."

Cope signed with DreamWorks Records in 1999, but his obscure debut, *Citizen Cope*—which sidestepped traditional musical characterizations—suffered from poor promotion and creative differences with the label. In 2003, he moved to Arista Records, where LA Reid gave him artistic freedom. Although Cope was tempted to follow Reid to Island Def Jam when Reid was let go, the politics of moving labels yet again was daunting. "I didn't want to see any more contracts," he says about remaining in the BMG system via RCA Records. "I just wanted my album to come out."

Flawless throughout, and with perspectives ranging from paranoid fantasy ("Pablo Picasso") to hopeful testimonial ("Penitentiary") to desperate longing ("Sideways") to chiding social commentary (on the first single, "Bullet and a Target"), this is one of those CDs you hear at a friend's house and rush out to buy. "He's like the best of what '78 to '81 had to offer in singer/songwriters," says Pharrell Williams. "But what's so incredible is that his music is designed for the 2000 decade. We need that."

"I've always been attracted to songs that deal with emotion and experience," explains Cope. And tonight at Sin-é, when he finishes his nourishing set, the audience is indeed satisfied.

Mimi Valdés

> O'Ryan **Heir Apparent**

The worst part of fame is the loss of privacy," says O'Ryan Grandberry as he lounges in the L.A. office of his manager, Chris Stokes. "But it comes with the territory, and music is what I love to do. It's in my blood." The 17-year-old Inglewood, Calif., native is no stranger to celebrity. He grew up watching his older brothers, Marques Houston and Omarion, stake their claim to the teen R&B game with Immature and B2K, respectively. Now O'Ryan is ready to chart his own course to success.

He initially wanted to pursue a different career path. As a freshman point guard at Hamilton High School Academy of Music, O'Ryan harbored hoop dreams and planned on becoming the next Allen Iverson, until he went on the *Scream 2* tour in 2002 with Marques. "I was watching him perform, and I was like, I *have* to do this," says O'Ryan.

Still his talents were being honed on the hush-hush, so his foray onto the music scene surprised even his relatives. "It came out of nowhere," says Marques. "O'Ryan was really shy, and then we heard him sing, and it was like, Whoa." Enter Stokes, the mastermind behind Immature and B2K. "I always knew O'Ryan was a star," he says. "He's the crooner young ladies need in R&B."

O'Ryan collected a cadre of fans while opening for B2K and Marques on the Pandemonium Holiday tour in late 2003, before signing with Universal/Motown Records earlier this year. Now his highly anticipated, self-titled debut carries lofty expectations. But with his sultry lead single, "Take It Slow," and a bevy of infectious teenybopper grooves, O'Ryan can officially kiss anonymity good-bye.

As for the demands of stepping up, O'Ryan isn't feeling much stress. "I feel a little pressure, but it gives me motivation," he says. "I play well under pressure." Let the games begin.

Sibylla Nash





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> Ciara Model Performer

I've been singing all my life, but it was never my focus," Ciara Harris says with a shrug while sitting in an uptown Atlanta café. "I wanted to be a professional model." But working the runway wasn't to be for the ATL-born stunner. Her true calling would be revealed to her when she saw Destiny's Child on television in 2001: After watching the supergroup perform, Ciara, now 18, was inspired to trade in her sashay for a microphone. "At that moment, I strongly felt like becoming an entertainer."

Fired up by her epiphany, Ciara joined a short-lived girl trio named Hear Say before going solo at the urging of the group's manager, Anthony "TA" Tate. The self-professed military brat (her mother served in the Air Force and her father was a sergeant in the Army) began feverishly practicing and studying her sonic heroes: Whitney Houston, Patti LaBelle, and Janet Jackson. "I set a goal," says Ciara. "And I was going to do whatever it took to be on top."

Tate introduced Ciara to local hitmaker Jazze Pha, who quickly signed the singer to a production deal with his Sho-Nuff label in 2002. "When I met her, she was just a 17-year-old with a great voice and a beautiful spirit," he says. "Now she's a polished, exceptional talent." Under Pha's tutelage, Ciara landed an audition with then Arista CEO Antonio "LA" Reid, who promptly added the eager artist to the LaFace fold.

Now, with her Sho-Nuff/LaFace/Zomba Label Group debut, *Goodies*, anchored by the Lil Jon-produced title track—a booty bouncing banger—Ciara is well on her way to fulfilling her musical fate. "I'm the first lady to do a crunk 'n' B record," she boasts. "But my album introduces other components and attributes that make up Ciara."

And Ciara's most endearing trait is her unyielding drive to succeed. "Now I take performing very seriously," she says. "Creating what people love is valuable to me, and that's what has gotten me where I am today." Plus a little bit of serendipity.

Saptosa Foster





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> Kevin Lyttle **sir Soca**

I don't really drink or smoke," says Kevin Lyttle, ordering a piña colada as the South Beach sunset paints the pastel patio of a swank Miami hotel. "Does that have alcohol in it?" he asks after the waitress has walked away. His road manager affirms and suggests that perhaps he should have ordered a virgin colada, and the 26-year-old soca sex symbol flashes a smile. "Oh, maybe I should have asked for a virgin," he says, with a laugh.

But a piña colada is the perfect drink for an artist whose self-titled debut album on Atlantic Records transports you to a beautiful tropical island. Press play, and you're swinging in a hammock on a secluded beach while a transistor radio in the sand keeps you and a loved one rocking in time to Lyttle's breezy falsetto over a rhythmic mixture of soca, dancehall, and R&B. "Keep the fire burning," says the St. Vincent native of his sultry sound. "I like singing dem sexy songs that appeal to women."

While dancehall artists like Sean Paul, Beenie Man, and Shaggy have brought Jamaican sounds to an international audience, soca—a super-up-tempo style of traditional Trinidadian calypso blended with Asian and African sounds—has remained an "ethnic" thing, mostly limited to Caribbean communities. Arrow's 1983 hit

"Hot Hot Hot" (later covered by drag-rocker turned lounge singer Buster Poindexter) was the biggest soca tune ever, until Kevin Lyttle's "Turn Me On" became a smash at the 2001 Carnival. "The reason why 'Turn Me On' has lasted almost four years is because it's music first and soca second," says the album's executive producer, Salaam Remi (Fugees, Nas, Inj Kamoze).

And with Remi at the helm providing the perfect backdrop for crossover success, Lyttle is betting that "ragga soca"—a new down-tempo style of soca—is the next "big thing," just as dancehall was in 2003.

But moreover, Lyttle wants to introduce his Vincentian roots through his music. By way of example, he shares some local slang as he stands up to go, leaving his piña colada untouched. "In Jamaica, they call the woman sexual organ 'pum pum.' In St. Vincent, we call it 'sassa'." But like his music, that's not for virgin ears.

Rob Kenner



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THE JUICE 100

THE JUICIEST PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS OF THE YEAR.

Call VIBE Tropicana, 'cause we're always juicy. Especially this time of year, when we unveil our annual Juice List, the definitive guide to everything hot in music, fashion, sports, film, television, and politics since last September. Check it out, and consider yourself an instant expert on the most significant happenings in VIBELand. No overnight celebrities here.



Beyoncé



Alicia
Keys

music

50 Cent

The mixtape behemoth achieved crossover superstardom in '03 and has been consolidating his gains ever since: marketing DVDs and a sneaker line, pushing his G Unit crew to the foreground, and upsetting Summer Jams everywhere.

Alicia Keys

N.Y.C. piano prodigy with old soul, geometric braids, and angel eyes seeks strong black brother—see Mos, Meth—to love the hurt away and help us emancipate ourselves from mental (and musical) slavery. Speak, sister! Better yet, sing!

Anthony Hamilton

This pint-sized singer's debut, *Comin' From Where I'm From*, journeys through love's twists and turns, city streets and country roads, to breathe new life into the sleepy soul music scene. But can he lose the Ashton Kutcher-esque trucker hats?

Beyoncé

Remember when listening to Destiny's Child was like drinking OJ after brushing your teeth? Now Queen B's the hottest chick in the game, with movie roles, fashion deals, a roomful of awards, and a beau with time to help out around the house.

Chingy

This St. Louis young'un has been Disturbing tha Peace just as much as Uncle Luda this year. Chingy sold 2 million records, had kids mimicking his slang, and even pulled Rudy Huxtable in his video.

Chris Stokes

The mastermind behind *Immature* and *B2K* went on to write and direct *You Got Served*, the No. 1 flick for three weeks. Your boy grossed \$40 million on an \$8 million investment, which are the kinds of numbers that get Hollywood totally Stoked.

Christina Norman

Dynamic president of VH1 navigates ratings turnaround? *Driven*. A black woman running things on a major cable network? *TV's Illest Minority Moments* and *Divas* combined. Expectations for the future? *Best Year Ever!*

DJ Danger Mouse

This underground producer turned media darling has made more noise this year critically than the Neptunes did commercially. With *The Grey Album*, his remix of the Beatles' *White Album* and Jay-Z's *The Black Album*, DM's stock—and credibility—soared. Now that's a mouse that roared.

Damon Dash

An arrogant businessman who puts his money where his mouth is, Dame's taken on music, fashion, vodka, and films. What's next—life insurance? We can see the ads now: Protect your family. Get a piece of the Roc.

David Banner

This Mississippi mack's style is ugly, like Bill Bixby meets Lou Ferrigno in the backseat of a Cadillac on 22s. We're righteously feeling ya, bruh—especially the conscious crunkery of *MTA2: Baptized in Dirty Water*. But leave the beard braids to WC.

Dizzee Rascal

He's no Gillespie, but the nervous beats and dirty, digital bass sounds do grow on you. Dude gets more press clips than airplay, most of the publicity coming from moron poseurs who are proud they recognized his Billy Squier sample.

Eve

Not even sleazebags peddling skin flicks from her past have slowed the roll of the fiercest female in hip hop: From *Barbershop 2: Back in Business* to her eponymous hit sitcom to the Fetish fashion line, E-V-E keeps doing the damn thing.

G Unit

No denying that this crew had a leg up thanks to powerful friends. That said, Lloyd Banks and Young Buck dropped buzz-worthy debuts and helped launch the affordable G Unit clothing label, outfitting thugs-in-training nationwide.

Kanye West

Higher education's worst nightmare has more juice than Welch's. West's interlude-heavy debut, *The College Dropout*, brought back the back-packer '90s, made conscious rappers relevant, and schooled execs on the value of a conceptually sound album. Now that's edutainment.

Kelis

Tapped by Britney to open the Onyx Hotel tour, our favorite dairy queen (and future Missus Nas) didn't quite whip up high sales with *Tasty*, but her frothy "Milkshake" was an inescapable, easy-to-swallow smash.



DJ Danger Mouse



G Unit

GET CRUNK

WHY SOUTHERN RAP STILL RULES THE WORLD.

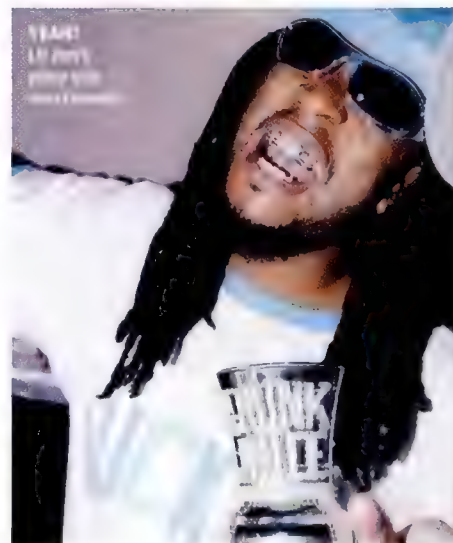
It starts with the highs. A sprinkling of hi-hats and stuttered drum patterns rolling over the track, raising the tension, sending a charge up your spine. Just a few bars of anxious energy, escalating, bubbling to a point way past boiling. And then the bass drops. *Boom!* Deep and furious, the thunderous 808 drives to the bone, rattling trunks and tearing the club down, whipping up a storm of self-hate, blind anger, and unbridled ecstasy into one crushing sound. This is crunk. This is the sound of the field as it burns the whole damn plantation to the ground.

Born deep in the South, crunk is the wild, rapping offspring of blues, rock, and bass; the frenzied byproduct, not of a dream, but of a dream deferred. Forgotten by the system and ignored by the country, the dirtiest of the South took their frustration, pain, and suffering to the chitlin circuit, cranking out hits drenched in sweat and itching for a fight—"Armed Robbery," "Bout It, Bout It," "Tear da Club Up"; tracks (and there are plenty of others) that ignited the region, tapping into the collective wish for unconscious release from the racism, poverty, and death that defined too many lives. Music for being mad when we don't even know what we're mad about, and if we do, then we don't know who to blame. Amerikkka's nightmare, for real. The most rebellious music since punk, or better yet, since rap.

But this year, the fire raging in the field became a controlled flame, and the entire nation moved closer to the hearth. Ushered into your home by Lil Jon, who looks like he just crawled out

of the backwoods himself, crunk became rap's new sound: approachable angst, perfect for the strip clubs or cruising the strip. Not broken, it hasn't popped just yet; it's just a bit more domesticated. Shaking free of its politics yet broadening the music at the same time (not unlike gangsta rap before it). A sacrifice worth making? Maybe it's not that deep. Maybe it's just your joint, your jam, that cut that gets you open at the club. That shit that makes you say, "Damn, bring that track back." And this time, crank it up. Okay?!

Benjamin Meadows-Ingram





Antonio "LA" Reid

The exec with a reputation for listening to his artists (supporting OutKast's vision for *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below*) rebounded at Island Def Jam in the top spot, and signed on as the man with the \$10 million ears.

Lil' Flip

Houston's DJ Screw put him on when he was a teen. The majors snatched him up before he was old enough to drink. A former regional and underground hero, Lil' Flip continues to personify the adage. "Don't mess with Texas."

Lil Jon

A leviathan on the charts ("Yeah!", "Salt Shaker," "Damn!", "Get Low"), the Czar of Crunk may not be a dreamboat (did you see Dave Chappelle's spoof?), but clearly it takes one grimy mo-fo to crank out those dirty beats.

Ludacris

Whether collaborating with Usher on the ubiquitous "Yeah!", holding it down on his own anthemic "Stand Up," or sticking it to Bill O'Reilly, the Mouth from the South has earned the right to rock a midget-sized medallion.

Mario Winans

Bad Boy producer/writer/hook man finally gets his shine. As the secular-music-singing baby of the Winans gospel dynasty, he still keeps things clean by jumping in bathtubs with all his gear on. What's he smoking? "I Don't Wanna Know."

MOST VALUABLE PLAYERS

THEY'VE PROVEN THEIR STATUS WITH BLOCKBUSTER ALBUMS, MOVIES, AND PRODUCTS—IN THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

Player: ICE CUBE

Remember: Started out in N.W.A., and later Westside Connection, and enjoyed solo rap career. Captured starring roles in *Boyz n the Hood*, *Anaconda*, *Three Kings*, and *Friday*, as well as executive-produced *Player's Club*, among others.

Hollywood shuffle: Appeared in *Barbershop*, starred and executive-produced its sequel and spin-off, and makes occasional cameos for homies.

The sequel: Has three new films on the horizon, including *XXX 2* with Samuel L. Jackson.

Rumors are swirling that he's in talks with Warner Bros. Records to start another label with acts like Foxy Brown and Talib Kweli.

Player: JERMAINE DUPRI

Sign here: After dancing in a Stacy Lattisaw video, Dupri evolved into a mogul by discovering Kris Kross, Da Brat, Jagged Edge, and Bow Wow.

Present: Settled his debt to the IRS, left his cash cows in ATL, and took So So Def over to BMG. Currently, his artist J-Kwon is on fire and the new Bone Crusher LP, *Fight Music*, has just been released. He's also partnered with no-carb, soy-based spirit 3Vodka.

Projections: Working on his next album, *Green Light*, to be released in November, as well as music from 3LW and Bow Wow.

Player: JANET JACKSON

Lessons learned: Sang alongside Jackson 5, played Penny on *Good Times*, pursued a successful solo career, and acted opposite Tupac Shakur in *Poetic Justice*.

Power moves: Survived Nipplegate, released her latest CD, *Damita Jo*, and is dating Jermaine Dupri.

Keep on: Kicks off first major tour in three years in September. Watch out for the DVD, *From Janet to Damita Jo*, which will feature various music videos spanning Janet's amazing career.

Player: JESUS

Genesis: Responsible for the biggest moneymaking holiday in the world, and is believed to have mad clout with the Guy Upstairs.

The good news: Made millions of dollars for Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, and provided inspiration for Kanye West's "Jesus Walks."

Revelations: In talks with major Hollywood studios to develop more movies that continue riding the resurgence.

Player: JAY-Z

Diversified portfolio:

Parlayed the success of several platinum-plus and critically acclaimed LPs, from *Reasonable Doubt* to *The Blueprint*, to help launch projects like Armadale Vodka, Rocawear, and Roc-A-Fella Films.

Moving product: Still riding the wave of his final multiplatinum LP, *The Black Album*, and the success of his signature Reebok sneakers, S. Carters.

Fade to black: Retired, but only from the recording studio. His 40/40 Club in New York will soon be expanding locations. He's one of the investors of the potential Brooklyn Nets.

Player: LUTHER VANDROSS

Memories: Made heartbreak sound so sweet with classics like '81's *Never Too Much* and '91's *Power of Love*.

Recognition: After surviving a major stroke, he received four NAACP Image Awards, a Soul Train Award, and four Grammys for *Dance With My Father*.

Plans: While Luther recovers, Alicia Keys and Patti LaBelle, among others, are recording a tribute album. And there's talk of a TV special as well.

Player: MASTER P

Made: Put New Orleans on the map with "Bout It, Bout It" back in '97. Soon after, everyone was scouting south of the Mason-Dixon. Executive-produced 'hood films like *I'm Bout It*, *I Got the Hook-Up*, and *Foolish*.

Multitasking: In addition to releasing his double CD, *Good Side/Bad Side*, he executive-produces his son's Nickelodeon show, *Romeo!*, and the new Romeo and Silk the Shocker LPs. He's also captain, guard, and forward of the ABA's Las Vegas Rattlers.

Son also rises: Look out for *Uncle P*, a family comedy executive-produced by Master P, starring Romeo, to premiere next year. P's also introducing a new diamond-encrusted watch line, called Master Pieces, with his lil' man.

Player: MISSY ELLIOTT

Her story: Originally down with DeVante Swing of Jodeci's female group, Sista, she eventually went her own way with Timbaland to culminate in her 1997 debut, *Supa Dupa Fly*. Platinum plaques soon followed.

Show and tell: Missy wrapped up the Ladies First U.S. tour with Alicia Keys and Beyoncé and went on to perform throughout Europe.

And then: Adidas will be releasing her sporty new clothing line this fall. Her UPN reality show, *The Missy Elliott Project*, will soon reach airwaves.

Player: P. DIDDY

Paid dues: This former intern started out giving Jodeci and Mary J. Blige image upgrades and helped create their sound. But he really made his name with the Notorious B.I.G. After Big's death, Puffy launched his own rap career and kept Bad Boy Records profitable. He also dabbled in acting in *Made* and *Monster's Ball*.

Shot caller: Wrapped up the final installment of *Making the Band 2* and landed a starring role in *A Raisin in the Sun* on Broadway. Poised to release the Biggie Duets CD/DVD, a New Edition LP, and an R&B hits compilation. Won Top Menswear Designer of the Year honors for his Sean John Collection.

To be continued: Currently filming *Love in Vain*, due out later

this year, and working on his final album, *PD5*. He's also launching a Sean John women's line, a men's fragrance, and is assisting with a national effort to get kids and minorities involved in this year's election.

Player: PRINCE

Past: After the phenomenal success of projects like *Purple Rain* and *Diamonds and Pearls*, Prince began going by a symbol or "the artist formerly known as" and left his label, Warner Bros.

He's back: Now that he's in control of his destiny and going by Prince again, it's paying off with the chart-topping LP *Musicology* and a sold-out tour.

Future: No one knows for sure, just as long as he remembers his real name.

Player: R. KELLY

Foundation: Once part of the R&B group Public Announcement, R. Kelly recorded several groundbreaking solo albums, and cultivated a career some folks would die for. He's even survived the kiddie-porn scandal—so far.

Play on: R. Kelly is set to release a

double CD called *Happy People/U Saved Me*. One half is stepping music, and the other side includes inspirational music.

Future shock: Although his legal problems have made it hard for him to travel outside of his native Chicago, word is he'll be kicking off a tour very soon.

Player: RUSSELL SIMMONS

Old school: Started Def Jam with Rick Rubin way back in the day. After selling the label to Seagram's for \$130 million, he focused on Phat Farm while dabbling in politics and charitable fund-raising.

Dollars and sense: His Phat Farm logo can be found on sneakers, cell phones, and check cards. He's also launched the sporty clothing line Def Jam University, and registered more than 500,000 young voters through the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network. Can we say:

"Paint the White House black!"

Luxury line: By year's end, Kimora Lee and her hubby

will launch Simmons Jewelry Company, which will feature diamond cuff links, dog tags, chains, and watches.

Player: SNOOP DOGG

Origins: Made his debut on Dr. Dre's "Deep Cover" and *The Chronic* LP. Death Row Records released his record-breaking debut, *Doggystyle*. After a stint at Master P's No Limit Records, he went on his own with the successful *Paid tha Cost to Be tha Boss*.

Now: Scored roles in *Starsky & Hutch* and *Soul Plane*, and finally hooked up with his original crew, Warren G and Nate Dogg, to release the 213 LP, *The Hard Way*.

And later: Look for these possible Snoop ventures in the works: a new LP on Doggy Style/Star Trak; an MTV reality show, *The Road to the Snooper Bowl*, which will chronicle his work as a kids' football coach; and the Snoopde-grille, a BBQ-grilling machine that will hit stores soon.

Ann-Marie Nicholson

POP LIFE:
Missy Elliott
and Prince





Mixshow Power Summit

For the sixth annual Mixshow Power Summit, rap industry bigwigs, brand-name artists, magazine editors, radio DJs, and groupies of all stripes converged in Puerto Rico to politic, eat, drink, and get their collective swerve on.

Michael 5000 Watts

Somewhere over the rainbow colors, Michael 5000 Watts is building an empire on the foundation laid by the late DJ Screw. As the man of the Swisha House, Watts has chopped and screwed albums by virtually everyone in the Dirty South. Houston, we have no problem at all.

OutKast

Not only did their double disc, *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below*, go nine times platinum, but they were the first hip hop group to take the Album of the Year Grammy home to the ATL, or whatever planet they now reside on.

Shyne

He was once poised to lead the rap game. But everything changed that fateful night at Club New York. Now that he's secured a reported \$15 million deal with Island Def Jam, Shyne's sitting on the biggest story in hip hop (see "Time Will Tell," page 172).

T.I.

With his trunk-rattling sophomore album, *Trap Muzik*, the Rubber Band Man hustled his way to hip hop's forefront. Proving the ATL is more than just crunk, the self-proclaimed King of the South might just live up to his lofty title.

Terror Squad

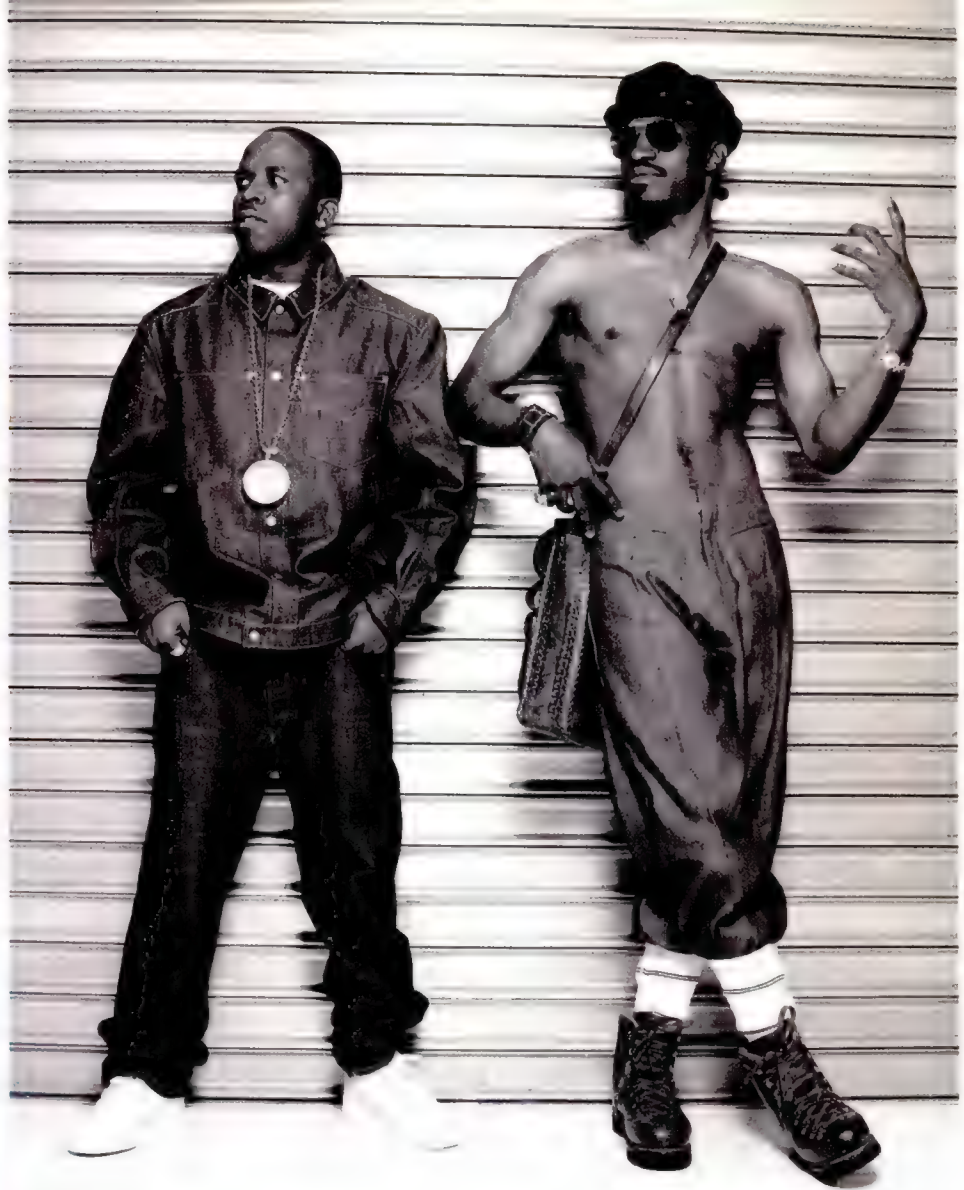
The road from posse to certifiable stars can often be rocky: Just ask Flipmode. But these artists stepped out from behind Fat Joe's considerable shadow and brought back authentic New York rap on their rugged follow-up, *True Story* (see "All for One," page 188).

Twista

Faster than a speeding bullet, Chicago's Twista zoomed up the charts with his "Slow Jamz." When his fourth album, *Kamikaze*, debuted at No. 1, the veteran MC left the competition coughing in his dust.

Usher

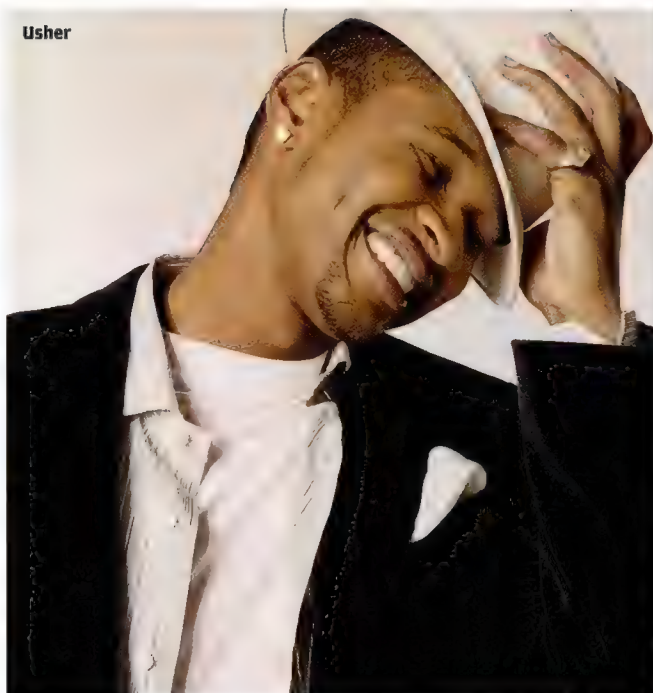
Talk about getting your grown man on. After surviving the breakup with Chilli and striking multiplatinum (1.1 million its first week) with *Confessions* and its jump-off single "Yeah!," Usher put Justin Timberlake in his place and made us proud.



OutKast



Twista



Usher

CELEBRITY CASE FILES

THIS YEAR, STARS AND HANDCUFFS WENT TOGETHER LIKE FAVA BEANS AND A FINE CHIANTI.

>BEANIE SIGEL

The rap-up: The Roc-A-Fella MC will be retried next year on attempted murder charges after his first trial ended in a hung jury.

What a thug about: Beanie pleaded guilty to packing heat and a "controlled substance" in an unrelated federal case.

>JAYSON WILLIAMS

The rap-up: Former New Jersey Nets center acquitted of aggravated manslaughter and aggravated assault charges for shooting and killing his limo driver, but found guilty of witness tampering. Williams will face a retrial in 2005 for reckless manslaughter.

Dropping dimes: Former teammates testified for the prosecution; witnesses reportedly switched sides—and their stories.

>KOBE BRYANT

The rap-up: Bryant accused of sexually assaulting a 19-year-old woman, but defense calls it a scheme to get her ex's attention.

Courtside drama: While the name and address of the accuser surfaced on Web sites and in tabloids, the Lakers guard suited up and helped power his team to NBA finals.

>LIL' KIM

The rap-up: The Queen Bee was charged with lying to a grand jury about a 2001 gun battle that erupted between her entourage and associates of Foxy Brown.

Makeover: If convicted, she could get up to 30 years in prison, where she would wear a tiny orange jumpsuit.

>LOON

The rap-up: Charged with assault with a deadly weapon, Loon allegedly stabbed a bouncer at the House of Blues in West Hollywood.

Keepin' it real: Could a reputation for violence redeem the Bad Boy rapper's metrosexual image?

>MYSTIKAL

The rap-up: Judge sentenced this Gulf War vet to six years for extortion and sexual assault of his former hairstylist. Mystikal paid his accuser a reported \$350,000 and avoided a civil suit.

And another thing: At the time of the trial, his first single for *Prince of the South* was "Pussy Pop."

>MICHAEL JACKSON

The rap-up: The King of Pop pleaded not guilty to 10 charges, including child molestation and conspiracy to abduct a child.

Man in the mirror: The new, subdued, spectacle-wearing—not making—Jackson may be strapped for cash. MJ impersonators are feeling the pinch.

>R. KELLY

The rap-up: Seven counts of soliciting a minor to have sex on tape were dropped—but that still leaves 14 charges of producing kiddie porn.

Nevertheless: In addition to scoring an NAACP Image Award nomination this year, Kelly picked up Best R&B/Soul Album, Male for the curiously titled *Chocolate Factory* at the Soul Train Awards.

>TURK

The rap-up: The Memphis rapper was charged with attempted second-degree murder for allegedly shooting a cop during a raid.

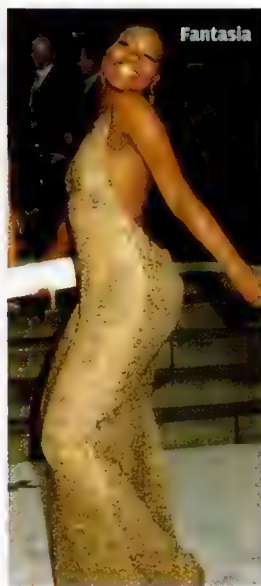
Working the system: His latest album, *Penitentiary Chances*, was released in April.

Laurina Gibbs

POETIC JUSTICE:
MJ and Lil' Kim



film+tv



American Idol

It's made stars out of geeks and single moms. Sure the song selection is corny, but there's no denying AI's clout. While critics beef, the public has spoken—and voted with higher numbers than are expected in the presidential election.

Anthony Mackie

He made that leap from hip hop bit actor (the arrogant Papa Doc in *8 Mile*) to Spike Lee's romantic lead in *She Hate Me*, where he plays a reluctant baby daddy to 19 lesbians. Dirt McGirt, he's comin' for ya.

Bernie Mac

The King of Comedy is now the big cheese of sitcoms. On his Fox hit, *The Bernie Mac Show*, he plays a family man who can't use his trademark "muthafucker" on prime time, but he's a funny muthafucker nonetheless.

Uncut

Not enough booty-shaking in rap videos for ya? Never fear, BET's *Uncut* is here. If by 3 a.m., you don't have your *Midnight Love* on lock, this video show gives light to where the sun don't shine.

Bryan Barber

Video director B-squared has gone from shooting Project Pat to showing Big Boi getting booty rubbed by Ki Toy. We want to ask which was harder: cloning Andre 3000 into an entire band, or making roses smell like boo-boo?

Cedric the Entertainer

Despite last year's so-so variety show, he's managed to kick down Hollywood's door more than any other black comedian in recent times. With a whopping six projects in motion, '04 looks like it's gonna be the big man's biggest year yet.

Chiwetel Ejiofor

He only plays with the big boys: Spielberg (*Amistad*), the Royal National Theatre, Stephen Frears (*Dirty Pretty Things*). Born in London to Nigerian parents, the award-winning actor has held his own with Liam Neeson, Taye Diggs, and even our favorite G.O.A.T.—LL Cool J.

Chris Rock

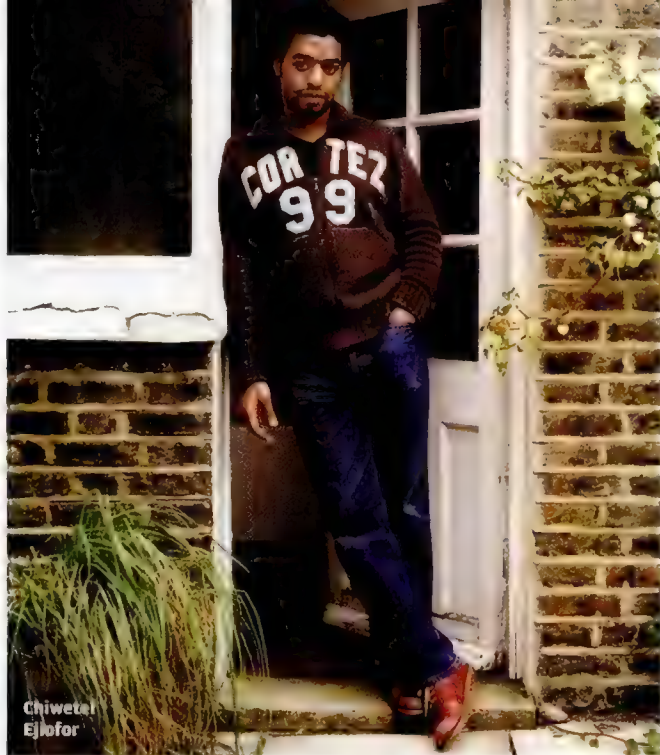
Head of State wasn't all it was cracked up to be, but we love Rock most when he's doing his balls-to-the-wall stand-up, like his fourth HBO special, *Chris Rock: Never Scared*. He's blaaaaack!

Dave Chappelle

Dave Chappelle's race criticism is bigger and blacker. But, this half-baked comedian and his Comedy Central show must never be forgiven for making "I'm Rick James, bitch!" an annoying catchphrase around water coolers.

Djimon Hounsou

Remember when we only knew him as that guy from the Janet Jackson video? After consistently memorable performances as the African dude in *Amistad* and *Gladiator*, Hounsou finally got a Best Supporting Oscar nod for *In America*. Pretty good for a video ho'.



Chiwetel Ejiofor



Cedric the Entertainer

IN DEVELOPMENT

IF HOLLYWOOD COULD ONLY MINE THE BAD MOVES OF THE YEAR FOR BLOCKBUSTER MOVIE IDEAS....

Call it: "TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN 2"

Starring: Indicted corporate CEOs, i.e., Dennis Kozlowski, Jeffrey Skilling, and Bernard Ebbers

Plot: White-collar thugs get busted for looting company assets, defrauding investors. Facing jail time, the tycoons try to beat the system with high-priced lawyers.

Call it: "SCREAM 4"

Starring: Howard Dean

Plot: Former Democratic presidential front-runner commits political suicide by going postal after the Iowa caucuses. Crunk remixes of his outburst inundate the 'Net.

Call it: "BAD BOYS III"

Starring: Barry Bonds, Jason Giambi, and Gary Sheffield

Plot: Major league sluggers are implicated in a steroids scandal and must rely on their clueless baseball commissioner and union rep to clear the sport's name before a Congressional panel. Bad boys, bad boys, whatcha gonna do?

Call it: "THE GODFATHER PART IV"

Starring: James Brown

Plot: Soul Brother No. 1 puts the smack down on his leading lady and scares the public with a perm-less mug shot.

Call it: "BLOW 2"

Starring: Whitney Houston, Faith Evans, DMX, and George Clinton

Plot: With their recording careers in decline, these artists are still reaching for that high note. Whitney's attempt to clean up her act seemed as suspect as a J.Lo marriage, while Faith is taking more hits than she's making. And DMX's GTA aspirations were a pipe dream. Clinton stands out as the true crack-up in this ensemble.

Call it: "DEEP COVER 2"

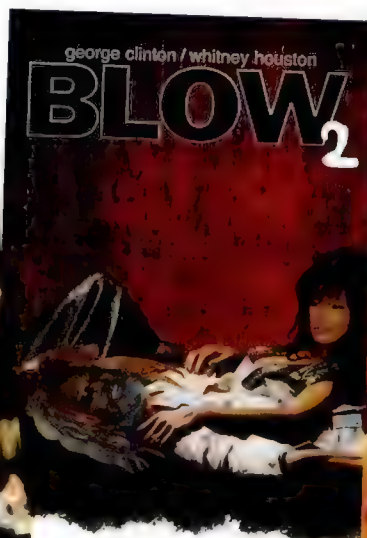
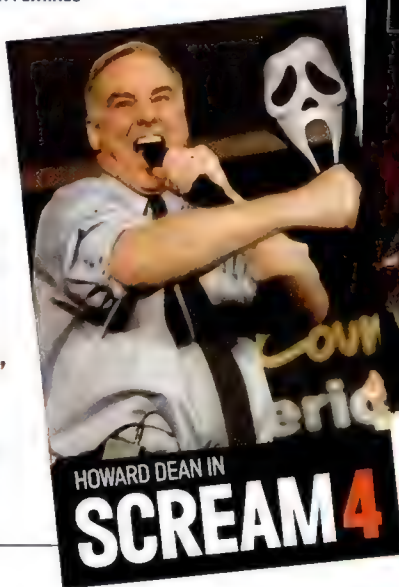
Starring: George W. Bush, Donald Rumsfeld

Plot: U.S. soldiers torture Iraqi POWs while Bush and company try to keep it under wraps. Once their cover is blown by a courageous Army general and the press, Rummy takes the heat—as Dubya claps him heartily on the back.

Rondell Conway

POSTER CHILDREN:

(From left) Dean, Clinton, Houston, Giambi, and Bonds





Queen Latifah



Farnsworth Bentley

Whether dancing spastically in OutKast videos, babysittin' Da Band, peddling his designer umbrella line, or trying to star in his own MTV reality show, the artist formerly known as Diddy's manservant has turned himself into a one-man movement. Can't knock the hustle.

Girlfriends

Sex and the City may be over, but its soulful cousin, *Girlfriends*, carried us through those long winter months like a snug pair o' Uggs. We love Joan, Maya, Toni, and Lynn for their brains, beauty, and brutal honesty.

Jake Nava

With a flair for ultrasexy, cutting-edge visuals, director Jake Nava brought us Beyoncé's epileptic booty bounce for "Crazy in Love" and dipped her in a gigantic martini glass for "Naughty Girl." Kelis and Usher have also gotten hip to the Nava-gator.

Jamie Foxx

This multitasking funnyman has played a Nobel prize-nominated O.G., costarred in *Collateral* with Tom Cruise, and recorded a smash hit with Twista and Kany-eezy. Now he's got folks whispering Oscar for his portrayal of Ray Charles. Wanda's come a long way (see "Moment of Clarity," page 194).

Jeffrey Wright

In the tragic epic *Angels in America*, a six-part HBO series, Wright portrayed a nurse for AIDS patients and gave more support than a Wonderbra, earning the critically acclaimed actor both an Emmy nomination and a Golden Globe.

Keith Beauchamp

His documentary, *The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till*, which set out to reexamine the savage 1955 lynching of a 14-year-old black boy, unearthed testimony from new witnesses and helped reopen the case of this still unsolved hate crime. Now that's juice!

Michael Moore

If white men are acting stupidly anywhere, Moore will get it on tape. He made Disney nervous with the Bush-bashing *Fahrenheit 9/11*, and won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. If controversy equals cash, Moore is golden.

The Next Episode

What could be better than mixing *Making the Band 2* and *8 Mile*? The brainchild of Shady Records CEO Paul Rosenberg and Interscope's Jimmy Iovine, Showtime's foray into hip hop won with simmering racial tension, boisterous personalities, and solid rap battles.

Queen Latifah

She's made a killing exploiting her big beautifulness in Hollywood with paper-makin' projects like the un-PC *Bringing Down the House*. Now she's got the sequel *Barbershop 2: Back in Business*, spin-off *Beauty Shop*, and much more in the royal pipeline.

The Sopranos

Whether they're chillin' at the 'Bing, scapegoating African-Americans, or shooting women through phone books, *The Sopranos* continue to put the fun back in dysfunction. Be honest, what other family would you rather hang out with on a Sunday night?

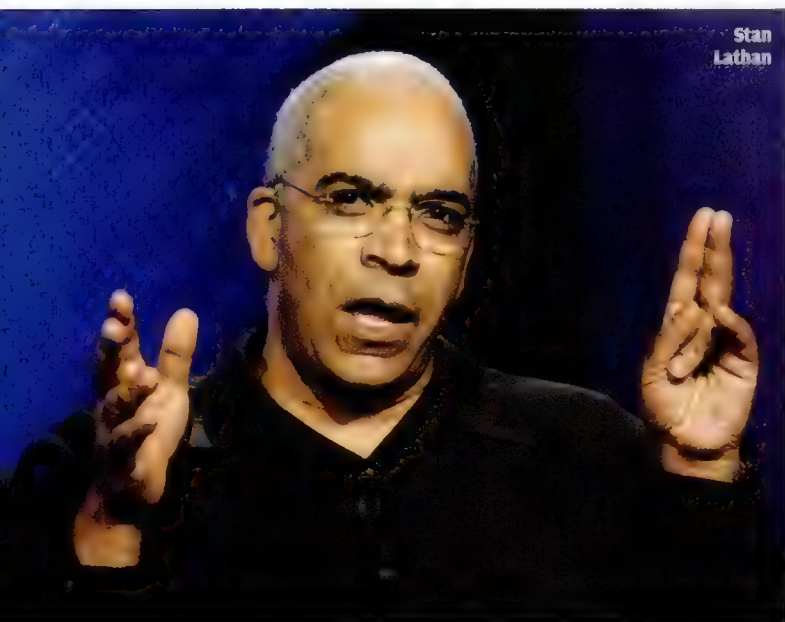
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Stan Lathan



Tupac Shakur

Stan Lathan

He's been doing his thing for years, directing and producing projects like *Def Poetry Jam* and *Cedric the Entertainer Presents*. But now that he's partnered with Russell Simmons to form a film company, he's Def-initely met his match.

Tupac: Resurrection

He uncannily narrates his own tragic tale through pieced-together footage, interviews, and photographs. *Resurrection* is a testament to the power of thoughtful filmmaking and the influence of a legend who refuses to die.

The Wire

Told from the perspectives of cops, snitches, and working stiff, HBO's pitch-perfect, brilliantly realized series keeps us hooked on the wiretaps and politics of police probes into the hard-core Baltimore underworld. Here's to rats and gats.

REAL PEOPLE

SURVIVOR WAS ONLY THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG. REALITY TV CONTINUES TO DOMINATE THE BOOB TUBE, GIVING US A CHANCE TO PICK ON OUR FAVORITES.

>THE APPRENTICE (NBC)

The premise: Sixteen wannabes compete for chance to work for the Donald at \$250K a year. In the end, uptight pretty boy Bill Rancic edges out the very chill Harvard grad Kwame Jackson.

Wild card: Omarosa broke out as the psycho chick we loved to hate. But whom now we just hate.

>THE BACHELOR (ABC)

The rules: Romantic picnics, elephant rides, overnight "fantasy suites," and a chance for one guy to pick from 25 hot women who all live together in a mansion. This program sure illustrates the true grit of today's dating scene.

Power of the dollar: Token villain Trish describes herself as a "gold-digging, money-grubbing whore." And this makes her different from anyone else competing for a boyfriend on national television because...?

>AMERICA'S NEXT TOP MODEL (UPN)

The real deal: Supermodel Tyra Banks picks 12 hopefuls to move into a New York City loft and compete for a modeling contract. After a tense fashion show, classic beauty Yoanna beats out supersexy Mercedes.

Glamorous life: Catfights and eating disorder dramas...in the modeling world? Get outta here!

>THE SWAN (FOX)

Changes: Self-described ugly ducklings take the term "makeover" to a whole other scary level in

order to become the "Ultimate Swan."

Cuttin' crew: Contestants work with therapists, trainers, and cosmetic surgeons to compete in a sadistic beauty pageant. At the end of each episode, we voyeuristically watch the transformed duckling discover her new face and body. And she now looks like a beautiful...drag queen.

>MAKING THE BAND 2 (MTV)

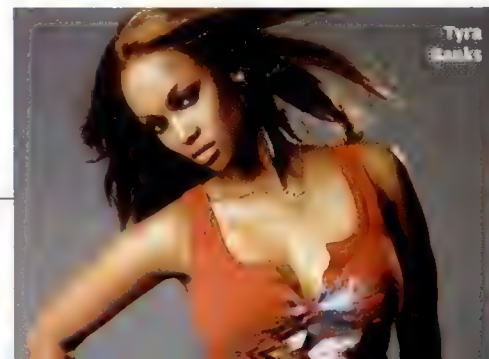
Can stop, will stop: The season finale held many surprises, like Sara and Young City getting the Bad Boy boot. Ness quit, and Dylan was evicted from Diddy's Park Avenue premises on sight.

Eviction notice: "Get the [bleep] out of my house!" Puffy hollers in his lounging robe. Yes, Dylan, now you really are fiyah, er, fired!

>NEWLYWEDS (MTV)

Coupling: The honeymoon might be over, but the cameras still remain. During the second and third seasons, Nick Lachey and Jessica Simpson let the public in on their marriage's growing pains.

Husbandry: We know she's a little bit ditz, and maybe she is just acting spoiled for the camera, but really...how can he stand it? *Sara Vilkomerson*



Tyra Banks

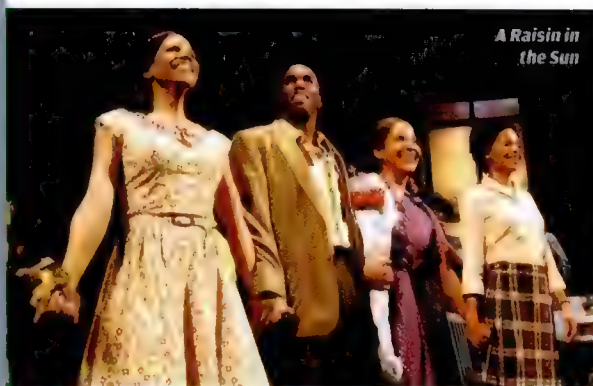
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A Raisin in the Sun



Sarah Jones

arts

Bill T. Jones

The Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company is in its 20th season of wowing audiences worldwide with stimulating artistry that combines narratives, video clips, and jazz and classical music. Jones, 52, still refuses "to be contained in a system."

Coco Fusco

This Cuban-born New Yorker has worn many hats—author, curator, professor, activist, and performance artist. But the common thread in all her work is political awareness and stereotype-defying themes. And she's got a seriously groovy name.

Edwidge Danticat

In a year when her native land experienced both violent riots and a bicentennial, the Haitian-born writer released *The Dew Breaker*, a novel in the form of interrelated stories about a torturer of Haitian dissidents. Talk about timing.

Jazz at Lincoln Center

This spectacular performance and educational facility opening this fall in New York City's Time Warner Center finally gives an African-American-based art form the institutional support it deserves. Not to toot guiding visionary Wynton Marsalis's horn, but toot toot.

A Raisin in the Sun

Thanks to acting coach Susan Batson, Puffy auditioned then starred in this Lorraine Hansberry classic. But the real draw was the show's female leads, especially Phylicia Rashad, who became the first black woman to snag a Tony for Best Lead Actress in a Play.

Sarah Jones

Once a pejorative phrase snooty Manhattan club promoters used to describe the outer-borough crowd, *Bridge & Tunnel* is now a successful off-Broadway one-woman show from Sarah Jones, a poet known for her hilarious impersonations of various N.Y.C. characters. Worth seeing? Catch a subway now.

Street Lit

The grammar and spelling might be suspect, but these 'hood page-turners leave you wanting more. Like their indie rap counterparts, these resourceful authors peddled their goods out the trunk (like Triple Crown Publications), until they scored their own major book deals (see "Write Thurr," page 182).

STARS GONE WILD

SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE ARTISTS WERE MADE FOR THE IDIOT BOX. THESE SHOCKING TV STUNTS OFFER PROOF.

Super Boob XXXVIII: It's hard to remember the Patriots winning on Adam Vinatieri's game-ending 41-yard field goal, when Justin Timberlake exposed Janet Jackson's nipple, causing a ripple around the world.

Good sport: "Bet I'll have you naked by the end of this song," Justin challenged. Any takers?

Stolen Glance: When Evanescence made off with the Best New Artist Grammy, 50 Cent attempted to steal back some of the spotlight by briefly bum-rushing the stage.

Stop thief: With five nominations and no awards for 50, seems like the Grammys know a thing or two about how to rob.

Tongue-tied: Aging pop icon Madonna, in a plea to remain relevant to this generation of screaming MTV-ites, famously engaged in an open mouth lip-lock with "Good Girl" Britney Spears at the VMAs.

Kiss-off: While Madonna and Spears's lip service was overhyped, Madge's smooch with Christina Aguilera (which took place just seconds after) was virtually overlooked. So much for getting dirty.

Titillating: Courtney Love, maybe hoping to generate some Janet Jackson-style heat, leaped on David Letterman's desk—back to the cameras—and flashed her headlights to the late-night talk-show host.

Crazy love: Hours later, she was arrested for allegedly hitting a fan with a wayward mike stand while performing elsewhere. After her wacky Letterman act, her arrest seems all for the breast, er, best.

Erik Parker



Featuring: LEEANN TWEEDEN



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technology



Rolls-Royce Phantom



Nokia camera phone

Apple

Like P. Diddy, CEO Steve Jobs just won't stop. Thanks to iPod mania and the resounding success of the iTunes Music Store, Apple's stock rose to a three-year high. The company may need a new motto: Apple 4 Life.

Camera Phones

From cheating lovers to embarrassing celebrity sightings, no one's immune to the quick snap of a camera phone, which has been banned at certain A-list clubs. A picture, especially one you can send in real time, has truly become worth a thousand words.

EA

We love Electronic Arts for giving us couch athletes a rush of professional play. But this video game juggernaut is also cleaning house with racing (*Need for Speed*), action (*Medal of Honor*), and the interactive (*The Sims*) titles. Play on playa.

Google

When a company name is a noun *and* a verb, it has become an institution. With rumors of an e-mail service and an IPO later this year, there hasn't been this much excitement about a Web site since the dot-com boom.

Legal Downloading

Once the RIAA started going after peer-to-peer networks and suing individuals for sharing files over those services, it became payday for legal-music-downloading services, making labels, artists, and even consumers—25 million of them on iTunes alone—happy.

Ring Tones

When it comes to customization, there's no better way to add a little style to your celly than with a ring tone that announces your musical taste. Urban artists have helped push the U.S. market to \$80 million in sales. Cha-ching!

Rolls-Royce Phantom

How do you make a crusty old auto brand cool again? By making an appearance in 50 Cent's "P.I.M.P. (Remix)" video and having Pharrell and Jay-Z shout you out on their songs. Just like that, everyone wants the \$320,000, 453-horsepower "ghost."

TiVo

TV by appointment is a wrap. Over 703,000 subscribers now control when and how they watch TV. For its ability to fast-forward through commercials alone, TiVo has become viewers' dream machine. Thank Ms. Jackson for making it a household name.

Featuring: LEEANN TWEEDEN



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media

Smack DVD

When Fat Joe conquered his fear of flying, *Smack* DVD magazine was right there with him. It's exclusive content like that, plus interviews with hip hop heavyweights, freestyle sessions, and no-holds-barred battles that make *Smack* so addictive.

Allhiphop.com

The self-proclaimed "world's most dangerous site" zaps quick and juicy alerts to your e-mail or two-way pager, breaking news about rap-related crime, label layoffs, and album releases with alarming speed. It's the true CNN of the streets.

Ego Trip

Forget *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, it's the guys behind *Ego Trip* that are television's next Fab Five. They created a fiendish cult following for their magazine and books. Fortunately, VH1 was smart enough to sign them up for TV's *Illust* *Minority Moments*.

Housebroken

How would you like to have a broke ex-rapper named DJ Dog—who happens to be a *real* dog—move in with your family? That's what L.A.-based law school graduate Steve Watkins, 30, humorously explores in his newly syndicated comic strip.

Tavis Smiley

BET thought it had knocked him out the box, but Smiley jumped back with his own talk shows on PBS and NPR. Still relevant and probing, he raps with the movers and shakers of the day.

REST IN PEACE

A MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR THE PEOPLE WHO
PASSED AWAY THIS YEAR.

**>FRED "RERUN" BERRY
(1951-2003)**

As hefty, red-bereted pop-locker, he leapt onto television screens on *What's Happening!!*, bringing a largely underground element of hip hop culture—break dancing—with him.

➤ **SOULJAH SLIM (1977-2003)**

His reputation as a thorough street rapper preceded him, but when he was gunned down in front of his mother's house, the realities of the New Orleans streets turned all too real.

►TONY THOMPSON (1954-2003)

The beloved drummer (on songs like Chic's "Le Freak" and "Good Times") also laid down the beat for big-timers like Diana Ross, Sister Sledge, and Jody Watley.

►RON O'NEAL (1937-2004)

When he nailed the character Youngblood Priest in *Superfly* (1972), his portrayal of pimpology epitomized the blaxploitation genre—an influence still going strong in hip hop.

> JOHN "J.J." JACKSON
(1942-2004)

This former radio jock was the first African-American VJ on MTV and helped usher in the music video revolution.

**>CLEMENT "SIR COXSONE"
DODD (1933-2004)**

He introduced Bob Marley & the Wailers to the world and helped craft the Jamaican sound system, which in turn spawned the birth of dub, dancehall, and rap.

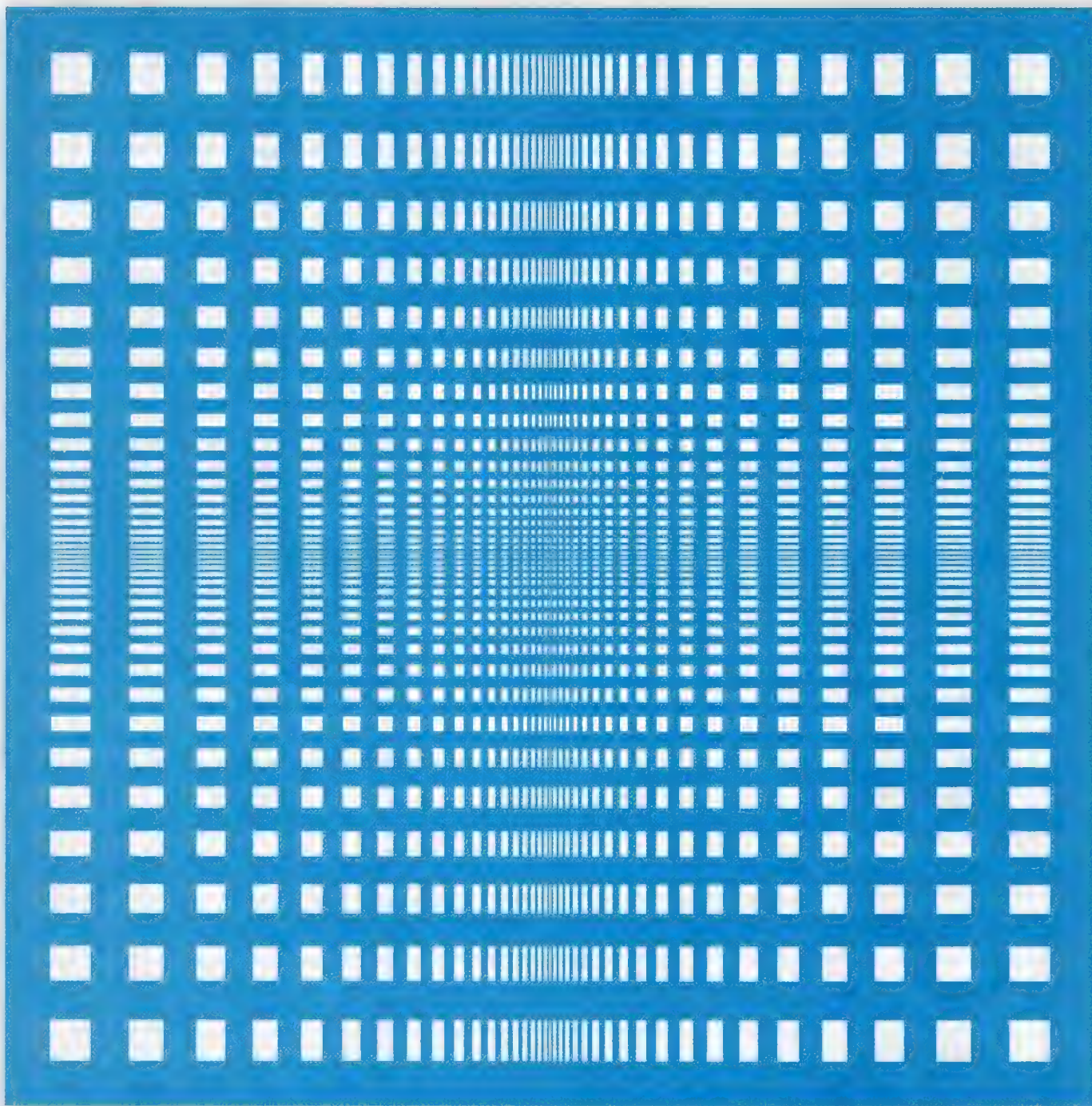
>JOHN WHITEHEAD (1949-2004)

As half of the team of McFadden & Whitehead, he wrote songs for Teddy Pendergrass, Jackson 5, Melba Moore, and Freddie Jackson, and as a performer, yielded the timeless inspirational classic "Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now."

► **RAY CHARLES (1930-2004)**

A gospel-rooted, blues-inflected, jazz-blazing genius at the keyboard and mike, he topped the R&B, rock, pop, and country charts. Brother Ray was his own genre: pure soul. *Chuck Creekmur*





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fashion



Marc
Ecko's
Cut & Sew



P. Diddy's
Sean John



Patrick
Robinson's
Perry Ellis



Bathing Ape

If you can charge \$350 and up for Air Force One knockoffs, your game is to be respected. Ill designs, low supply, and high demand is the strategy Japanese designer Nigo uses to keep his cult following drinking the Kool-Aid.

Button Downs

Lord Hov spoketh, and the masses abandoned their jerseys faster than you could say "change clothes." From the Tommy H line to upstart RyanKenny, the button down can take you from the boardroom to the block.

Diamond Pushers

Moving more rocks than the bottom of your fish tank, Chris "the Ice Man" Aire, Jacob the Jeweler, and Lorraine Schwartz create unique pieces for rappers, R&B singers, A-list movie stars, and successful neighborhood hustlers.

Enyce

Liz Claiborne wanted in on the profitable urban sportswear game, and relieved Fila of its hip hop offshoot, Enyce, and the company's little sister line, Lady Enyce, for 114 million big ones. That's a lot of hooded velour tracksuits.

Marc Ecko

When hip hop put away the throwbacks, he followed suit. For fall 2004, Ecko launched Cut & Sew, a fresh line of blazers, cashmere sweaters, and woven shirts tailored for collegians and dropouts alike.

Patrick Robinson

He reinvigorated a once moribund fashion house (Perry Ellis); injected a little retro flair (from the nifty '50s) into contemporary collections; and is touted as the It designer du jour. Keep watching.

Phat Fashions

Russell done did it again. He's flipped his profitable Phat Fashions corporation for a hefty \$140 million deal with manufacturing and production giant Kellwood Corp., now the umbrella company for Phat Farm and Baby Phat, all while remaining on the throne.

Rapper-Endorsed Sneakers

50 Cent and Jay-Z cashed in with their sneaker lines, which both take a nod from classic cross-trainers and tennis shoes. The G Unit G6s and the S. Carters were top sellers at Reebok and gave street soldiers a nattier look. Who's got next?

Sean John

P. Diddy's got more grandiose plans for his \$175 million, award-winning menswear line: a flagship New York store on Fifth Ave., a partnership with designer Zac Posen to create high-end women's wear, and a deal with Estée Lauder for a fragrance. The saga continues.

White Ts

Crisp with jeans and kicks, cool with a button down, and gangsta on the Big & Tall tip. Whether you opt for designer or the five-for-\$10, as long as it's "icy," you're white-T pimpin' like Jadakiss.



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sports



Alex Rodriguez

His contract is worth more than most Third World nations' GDPs. So how do you live up to a \$252 million deal? Become the most consistent power-hitting Gold Glove fielder, and take your game center stage—the New York Yankees.

Antonio Tarver

After his controversial loss to Roy Jones Jr. in 2003, Tarver returned with a chin-check for the ages, knocking Jones damn near into retirement with the most shocking blow this side of Buster Douglas, setting up heavyweight paychecks for 2005.



Connecticut Basketball

March Madness was twice as crazy in Storrs, Conn., as both the men's and women's squads brought home NCAA championship trophies, an unprecedented feat. In doing so, UConn cemented its reputation as the mecca of college hoops.

Detroit Pistons

Old reality: The L.A. Lakers are unbeatable titans. New reality: Detroit's bad boys—led by Wallace squared, Rip Hamilton, Chauncey Billups, and coach Larry Brown—trumped the Lake Show by leading the Pistons to their first title in 14 years.

Freddy Adu

While most his age were adjusting to high school, this 15-year-old prodigy was electrifying the soccer world. As Major League Soccer's top draft pick, Adu became the youngest player in a U.S. pro-sports league in more than a century. Kids today!

Jarome Iginla

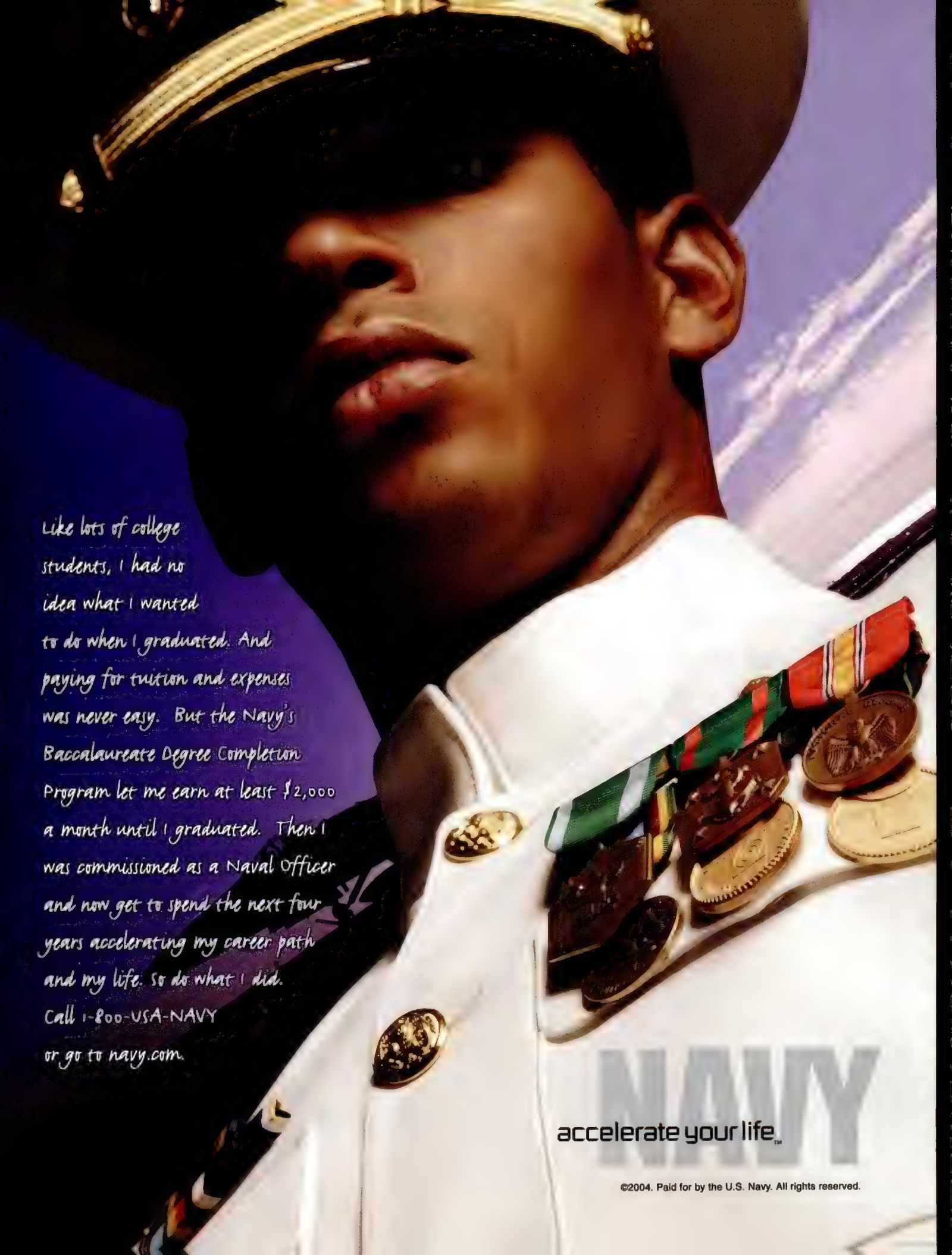
The best hockey player in the world is a black guy called Iggy. Though his Calgary Flames fell to the Tampa Bay Lightning in the Stanley Cup Finals, Iginla's league-leading 13 playoff goals secured his rep as the new face of the NHL.

Kevin Garnett

Hard to believe the former teen phenom is now a 28-year-old vet, but in his ninth season, KG came of age. The 6'11" forward led the Minnesota Timberwolves to the Western Conference Finals and won league MVP. Promise fulfilled.

NBA Rookies

Jordan's gone. Kobe may be off to jail. Bless LeBron James, Carmelo Anthony, and Dwyane Wade for coming into the league. These rookies made grown men look like little boys with their SportsCenter-worthy plays. Take note class of '04: The heat is on.



Like lots of college students, I had no idea what I wanted to do when I graduated. And paying for tuition and expenses was never easy. But the Navy's Baccalaureate Degree Completion Program let me earn at least \$2,000 a month until I graduated. Then I was commissioned as a Naval Officer and now get to spend the next four years accelerating my career path and my life. So do what I did. Call 1-800-USA-NAVY or go to navy.com.

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places

40/40 Club

Jay-Z will not lose—not as a rapper or as entrepreneur. So it's no surprise that his swank Manhattan sports bar would be expanding. Full of fattys, flat-screens, and button-down broker types, it's the urbanite's ESPN Zone.

Atlanta

Though anyone who calls it Hotlanta should be slapped, this town is definitely on fire. Home to OutKast, Lil Jon, Ludacris, and T.I., the New South capital keeps on makin' it, while the rest of the country keeps on takin' it.

Chicago

The Second City finally took center stage this year. Hometown to undisputed R&B heavyweight R. Kelly, fast-rap master Twista, hip hop upstart Kanye West, and backpack god Common, Chicago's steppin' it up...in the name of love?

St. Louis

The Midwestern city had us shakin' our tail feathers, gettin' tipsy, and using "right thurr" in daily conversation. With Murphy Lee, Chingy, and J-Kwon all appearing on Top Five hits, *Nellyville* became ground zero for hip hop's teen summit.

Tokyo

Our undying devotion to sushi, Hello Kitty, and Yohji Yamamoto's fly kicks notwithstanding, the West's fascination with the vibrant Japanese capital got a boost from Hollywood this year with blockbusters like *Kill Bill: Vol. 1* and *Lost in Translation*. Hail!

FIRE IN THE HOLE

ONLY A LITTLE SPARK IGNITES OUR IMAGINATIONS. THEN—POOF!—HOW SOON WE FORGET.

> FRIENDSTER

The flash: Relationships thrived online through this e-meeting ground as we tried to find how many degrees we were separated from Kevin Bacon—and that cutie across campus.

The pan: With the site's service-lag issues, its moral-policing practices, and the rise of silly knockoffs like Petster, we've since seen the error of our e-palling ways.

> UGG BOOTS

The flash: Sarah Jessica Parker and Pamela Anderson walked these glorified moccasins into our lives, leaving a trail of smitten women willing to pay up to \$180 per pair.

The pan: While they offered a comfortable reprise for well-heeled women with footwear fetishes, a shoe that could be found in the rocky closet of Xena the Warrior Princess couldn't remain fashionable forever.

> WILLIAM HUNG

The flash: His endearing yet disturbing performance on *American Idol* warmed hearts.

The pan: As if Ricky Martin's version of "She Bangs" wasn't enough to make you puke, Hung recorded an album full of gut-wrenching covers.

> METROSEXUAL

The flash: *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* loyalists rejoiced while men everywhere claimed their right to pedicures, day spas, color-coordinated outfits and—*gasp!*—clean drawers.

The pan: After discovering that the term had nothing to do with an active urban libido, men everywhere renounced their metrosexuality.

Erik Parker





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politics



9/11 Panel

This bipartisan commission conducted massive interviews and investigated who knew what and when. It thugged Condi into testifying publicly, though Bush got to have Cheney hold his hand. The truth is out there...somewhere.

Al Sharpton

He may never be president, but this year the oft-maligned activist brought candor and much needed sincerity to the Democratic Party, taking stands on gay marriage, American foreign policy, and presidential malfeasance, which centrist Dems were too shook to tackle.

Barack Obama

The polls say this handsome, Ivy-trained Chicagoan will become just the third African-American U.S. senator since Reconstruction. His hardheaded idealism, political savvy, and boundary-crossing star power are starting to make people dream: first black president.

John Kerry

The Massachusetts senator and decorated Vietnam vet went from pretender to a contender when he steamrolled the Democratic primaries and caucuses—emerging as most-likely-to-beat-Dubya. That granite grill looks ready-made for Mount Rushmore.

Hip-Hop Summit Action Network

They registered hundreds of thousands of young voters in urban communities and hosted consciousness-raising events during NBA All-Star weekend and Super Bowl week, but, most importantly, they got Louis Farrakhan to broker peace between Ja Rule, and well, Ja Rule.

U.S. Troops

There is no denying the bravery of our guys and gals overseas. Leaving friends and family for months on end to dodge gunfire and fry in the desert is no picnic. Peace in the Middle East, for real.

JUICELESS

FOR A MINUTE THEY WERE HUGE, BUT NOW THEY'RE ALL SPATTERED OUT.

Who: BENNIFER

Why: It's a classic cautionary tale of overexposure. Now let's all take a solemn oath to never say "Jayoncé."

Who: CARSON DALY

Why: Ryan Seacrest nabbed his place as most annoying white guy on TV to say things like, "What up, dawg?"

OVER AND OUT:

The Matrix's Jada Pinkett Smith and singer Ozzy Osbourne

Who: JAYSON BLAIR

Why: His much hyped tell-all book about *The New York Times* only made us wonder: What drove him to be one of journalism's all-time nut cases?

What: THE MATRIX SEQUELS

Why: Yes, the special effects were cool...the first time. Can anyone remember a plot point from the next two?

Who: THE INC.

Why: Remember when Ja Rule wasn't a punch line? Remember when some people thought Ashanti's career would be larger than Beyoncé's?

Who: THE OSBOURNES

Why: Thankfully, there is no one left to get sick, injured, or sent to rehab.

Who: SADDAM HUSSEIN

Why: He looks much less terrifying in an undershirt. But where are the Weapons of Mass Destruction?
Sara Vilkomerson



Illustration by DAVID COWLES

*"Should someone
be forced to
pay for minutes
they don't use?"*

Not in my America."

Pay As You Go by



mobile

Live without a plan.



RUB-A-DUB-DUB

TEN CELEBS GET HOT IN THE TUB.

PARTY PEOPLE:
(Clockwise from left) R. Kelly, 50 Cent, Eve,
Lil Jon, Alicia Keys, Kanye West, Janet Jackson,
Usher, Andre 3000, and Beyoncé



CHOOSE



FLAVOR



**THE MAJORITY OF BUD DRINKERS SAID MILLER
GENUINE DRAFT HAS MORE FLAVOR THAN BUD.**

MGD IS ALSO COLD-FILTERED 4 TIMES FOR SMOOTHNESS.

Live Responsibly

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NOT ALLOWED DURING PHOTOGRAPHY

- * **KISSING**
- * **TOUCHING IN A SEXUAL MANNER**
- * **SITTING ON LAPS**



TIME WILL TELL

In his first interview from prison, **SHYNE** lets loose on P. Diddy, 50 Cent, and the conspiracy that put him in jail. **AKIBA J. SOLOMON** locks in to discover why, four years after the debacle, the former bad boy refuses to banish freedom from his mind. // Photographs by Dana Lixenberg

amaal "Shyne" Barrow, 25, sits on the prisoner side of the table. He's wearing the perversely preppy L.L. Bean-esque prison issue—forest green. Correction officers oversee his every transaction. And yet the Belize-born, Brooklyn-bred enigma insists that he's not really here at Clinton Correctional Facility serving the third year of his decade-long sentence. He won't give this place the satisfaction. "You call it prison," he says in the baritone that was once famously compared to the Notorious B.I.G.'s. "But it's more like being on a journey. When I'm able to think clearly, to bow down and praise my maker, it don't get no freer than that." / Despite Shyne's self-preserving perception, it's hard to ignore the physical reality of Clinton, a massive state prison surrounded by a bleak blip of a town called Dannemora, N.Y. The razor wire is sharp. The walls are thick. Almost all of the guards are white, while nearly three-quarters of the prisoners are black and Latino. Tupac spent nearly a year here. And former Black Panther Robert "Seth" Hayes still languishes at Clinton. // Once inside, every visitor must go through a metal detector, creep across a barren courtyard, and take a seat at the long, low, wooden table that separates the visitors from the inmates. In here, whether your spirit is free or not, shit *is* real. /// Choking on the fetid air of Clinton, you could make a *Scared Straight!* kind of argument for why Shyne's moral stance carries more consequences than rewards. However, the time away has invigorated his career rather than killed it. In the present rap climate of 50 Cent's commercial gangsta appeal, Shyne has become a folk hero whose legend grows with each day of his absence. //// "Shyne's story alone will sell records," predicts Sway, an MTV News commentator and cofounder of the legendary *Wake Up Show*, a syndicated radio program. "He appeals to the same audience as 50 Cent: inner-city youth who feel like they got it bad in the struggle, nerds who want to seem down, and people who don't live in the community but are fascinated by our lives. Shyne will validate their hipness." /// Fat Joe elaborates: "There's so much fakeness in hip hop, so many gimmick rappers and character dudes.

TURNING THE TABLE:
"You call it prison,"
says Shyne of Clinton
Correctional Facility
in Dannemora, N.Y.
"But it's more like
a journey."



RAP ATTACK:
 "He [50 Cent] tried
 to sign me to G Unit,
 tell 'em how you made
 me offers / But I don't
 run with rats, I'm
 the Godfather."



But Shyne is as real as any soldier."

Kanye West ramps up the lovefest: "I had Shyne in mind when I made 'Lucifer.' I could have pictured him on 'Jesus Walks.' He is one of the few niggas who really lives by his word."

M-1 of dead prez, a onetime skeptic, pays his respects: "Honestly, I just listened to his album in 2003. I get inspiration from him. He'll say things like, 'Hip hop is not responsible for the violence in America' in the middle of a song about slinging mad coke. He's a

struggling black man, and his struggle is real."

Even Puffy, his onetime codefendant, concedes: "He's definitely a musical genius."

Which brings us to Bidding War: The Sequel (in 1998, Bad Boy won the first bidding war for Shyne's debut, signing him for over a million dollars). Last spring, Shyne began taking meetings with the check-signers who had come courting shortly after his sentencing. True to form, Shyne refuses to name names but says that "every major label boss" trekked upstate, spawning enough false

rumors to crash a BlackBerry. There were Shyne sightings, premature news stories about his still-pending appeal, and reports of a \$7 million deal with Columbia or Warner Music Group or Elektra or Death Row or Ruff Ryders or Shady or Interscope or The Inc. or Jesus Christ (okay, not Jesus).

Also among the suitors was 50 Cent, who, according to Shyne, hoped to enlist him as a soldier in his G Unit. But then 50 went on N.Y.C.'s Hot 97 and rapped: "I heard Irv is trying to sign Shyne, so I don't got no love for him / Tell him 50 said he's soft and won't shoot up a club again." After that, Shyne was unmoved by the possibility of working with 50, in any capacity. "The little doggy still wanted to sign me and wanted me to ride with him. He apologized for the comment," says Shyne. "But before that, I was angry."

According to Shyne, when word of 50 Cent's dis reached him, God created a response through "immaculate conception" titled "For the Record," on which he questions 50's street credibility and threatens to reunite him with his dead mother. "You just wanna sell records.... You don't want to ride," Shyne raps. "You want to get rich and hide / 'Cause niggas would have died if they shot me nine times / That's why he tried to sign me to G Unit, tell 'em how you made me offers / But I don't run with rats, I'm the Godfather."

"I couldn't get on the radio or mixtapes and defend myself from here," Shyne says of his dis record, confident that the battle will stop with his rhyme. "I had to hold it. And I still didn't send the wolves after him, so at the least, he has to hold that."

The song appears on his sophomore album, *Godfather Buried Alive*. Whether 50 Cent, who was unavailable for comment, will respond is yet to be determined.

In the end, Island DefJam prevailed in the competition to sign Shyne, inking what it calls "a multimillion-dollar joint venture" between the company and Shyne's Gangland Record Corp. Sources close to the deal say it's a \$15 million agreement—a risky venture for an artist whose debut barely sold 900,000 copies and who has no prior experience as a music executive. Not since Tupac has an artist been able to squeeze as much juice from behind bars. "Shyne's personal issues do not stop him from having a voice," says IDJ honcho Antonio "LA" Reid of his decision to work with a man who may not get out of prison for another sev-



en years. "Shyne has demonstrated a keen understanding about both business and creativity. He understands that business is about vision and knowing what it takes to monetize that vision into economic empowerment." And from jail, he intends to do just that.

Godfather Buried Alive pieces together the political possibilities and the street arrogance of a pre-jailed Shyne. He lyrically slow-rides over the hypnotic "Quasi OG," which samples Bob Marley & the Wailers' haunting song "No More Trouble." He tough-talks to Swizz Beatz's steadily pounding drums on "Shyne." And through it all, you get that there's a message beneath the gangster lean.

"I'll ride to the end for him," says Foxy Brown, who's rumored to have linked up with Shyne and Jay-Z to form a supergroup of the Firm proportions (as in Foxy, Nas, Dr. Dre). "He's sitting in prison barking out orders like, 'I need you to be in the studio at 7 p.m.' I'm like, Wow, you're running an empire from behind bars."

VIBE: How did this idea for a Brooklyn supergroup come about?

SHYNE: I knew Inga [Foxy] since we was in high school. Jay-Z is someone who I have a distinct level of respect for, musically. I spoke to Inga and Jay-Z about it, and we're working out the logistics. Right now, it's really just a vision. It ain't solidified.

Do you think the music you recorded when you were on trial still represents you?

Oh, absolutely. You'll feel what I was going through—the fuckin' pressure of havin' to go from the courtroom straight to the studio and really make some shit, because this could be the last song I record for who knows how long.

What do you think about hip hop right now?

Four years ago, I made a conscious decision not to listen to the radio or watch TV. I was thinking about why God had me trapped off like this, as if he was telling me that he ain't want me to do music on some Mason Betha shit. But during that time, records just started being created through me. I became the artist I always wanted to be without trying.

So you're saying that for all these years, you haven't thought about the competition?

Look, I'm not concerned with the external shit. I got an appeal pending. I'm fighting for my life. Fuck what these cartoons are out here talking about, man. So many things come before what's happening with music.



So here's a refresher on how Shyne wound up on this...*journey*: On December 27, 1999, Natania Reuben, Julius Jones, and Robert Thompson were shot while partying at midtown Manhattan's Club New York. By most accounts, the gunfire stemmed from a heated exchange between Sean "Puffy" Combs and Matthew "Scar" Allen. Combs, his former girlfriend Jennifer Lopez, and longtime bodyguard Anthony "Wolf" Jones fled the club and led police on an 11-block chase. Shyne, however, was

nabbed right outside the club with a 9-mm tucked in his waistband.

On March 16, 2001, after a seven-week trial, Combs was cleared of gun possession and bribery charges, as was codefendant Jones. (Last November, Jones was killed by a stray bullet outside of an Atlanta nightclub.) Shyne, the only defendant who copped to having and firing a weapon, was convicted of weapons possession, reckless endangerment, and assault—all but the most serious charge of attempted murder. And while Shyne has



"I COULDN'T GET ON THE RADIO OR MIXTAPES AND DEFEND MYSELF FROM HERE. AND I STILL DIDN'T SEND THE WOLVES AFTER [50 CENT]."

publicly ridiculed Combs, labeling him a snitch and a rat, Combs's account of that night differs from his former protégé's. "None of my testimony could have, in any shape, way, or form, hurt him," says Combs. "Anything that I ever said was only dealing with me. If I didn't have a gun, I'm gonna get on the stand and say I didn't have a gun. But I ain't never gonna sell out anybody else and say I ain't have a gun but *he* did."

The trial still infuriates Shyne. Three years removed, and he still believes he was wronged by Combs, a man he once called a brother. "He wouldn't even put up my bail!" Shyne says. (Combs claims that he did, and contributed to Shyne's appeal.) "I had to beg and cry for him to pay for the lawyers. He did not personally contribute to my appeal. Whatever money he gave me was from my recording budget by Arista."

Let's go back to before the trial—1998. There was talk of Puffy signing you for more than a million dollars after a heated bidding war. You were going to be the next Biggie. By '99, you had a reputation for unjustifiable arrogance. What happened?

I ain't never been given nothin' in my life; all I had was just the richness of my thoughts. So when the shit finally translated into material, I ain't know how to act. I'd get up at, like, 7 at night and drive around in my Mercedes 600, just looking for something to run up in. I'd go to the club and spend thousands of dollars on Cristal. Healthwise, I was fucked up.

How'd you find the energy for all that?

Sometimes I didn't. I remember me and this chick—she's like one of the biggest stars ever—we was almost ready to go for the home run, and I fell asleep!

Asleep on the job? Whoa. When did you decide to pull it together?

Me and the R&B chick had a little argument, and she was like, "Yo, duke, you ain't even sell one record. Who the fuck do you think you are?" That shit reminded me that since I'm a music nigga, I'm supposed to be making music.

Did your relationship with Puff transcend the professional?

Yeah. When my funds were fucked up at the end of '99, he let me stay at the crib. I was with him and homegirl J.Lo all the time. When the nigga had

Thanksgiving, I was there. His family was there. Wolf—God bless the dead—and his family was there. At that point, I was his little brother, so despite whatever I heard about homeboy, like the way he treated his artists, I ain't seen that until the trial.

When you saw where the confrontation was going—money being tossed, voices being raised—why didn't you just walk away?

That wasn't my beef, but I wasn't gonna walk away—I live with this nigga. I roll with this nigga every day.

During Puffy's testimony, his attorney asked him if you were friends, and essentially, he said that you were no different than his other artists. What did your relationship have to do with the criminal charges?

There's a New York self-defense statute that says

that you don't have the "duty to retreat" if a loved one or friend is still in danger. So if Puff would have said I was his homeboy, my lawyers could have argued that I had no duty to retreat. Instead, Scrams got on the stand on some, "Yeah, he's just another artist on my label." This fucked me up with the jury.

I can imagine it hurt in other ways, too.

You know, after the conviction, I was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. This was based on me being shot when I was younger; you know, when I was, like, 15 they shot me and they blew my homeboy's brains out right in front of my eyes.

But why did you accuse Puffy of being a rat?

They called this chick, Cherise Myers, to testify. She said that I pulled out my gun and started shooting all crazy, and that Wolf—God bless the dead—was

BREAKING OUT

Shyne isn't the only rapper to put his career on the line with a stint in the clinker. Here are some other MCs determined to beat the rap.



TUPAC SHAKUR

Time served: February 1995–October 1995

Jailed for: Sexually assaulting a female admirer in a New York hotel room.

Outcome: 'Pac negotiated a deal with Suge Knight from behind bars, and Death Row famously helped get 'Pac sprung—paying a portion of the rapper's \$1.4 million bail. His classic double album, *All Eyez on Me*, went on to sell more than 9 million units. Since he was gunned down in September '96, the hip hop martyr has sold over 25 million albums.



PROJECT PAT

Time served: June 2002–present (four-year prison sentence)

Jailed for: The Memphis police found a pair of loaded revolvers under a floor mat in Pat's car after he was pulled over for a traffic stop.

Outcome: The arrest came as Pat's hit, "Chickenhead," was coming up. His album, *Mista Don't Play*, prospered despite his legal troubles—selling more than 500,000 copies. Looking to the streets for support, Pat dropped *The Appeal* mixtape in November 2003.



SLICK RICK

Time served: June 1991–July 1996

Jailed for: At the height of his popularity in 1990, Slick Rick shot his cousin and a bystander; Rick said his cuz had threatened his family and tried to extort him.

Outcome: While out on bail awaiting sentencing, he recorded '91's *The Ruler's Back*, and while out on work release, '94's *Behind Bars*. In '99, the Slickster returned with the gold-selling *The Art of Storytelling*, featuring Nas, Snoop Dogg, Raekwon, and OutKast, among others.



OL' DIRTY BASTARD

Time served: July 2001–May 2003

Jailed for: Dirt Dog was sent up North for a two-to-four-year bid on charges of crack possession.

Outcome: Shortly after he was sprung, he renamed himself Dirt McGirt and joined up with Roc-A-Fella Records. VH1 filmed Dirt's post-jail exploits in a special called *ODB on Parole*. But the dust bowl surrounding the Wu-Tang affiliate has yet to translate into sales, since Dirty's fourth album has yet to drop.

Chuck Creekmur

hellomoto.com/producer



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"HERE WAS A 21-YEAR-OLD MAN THINKING HE KNEW HOW TO TRY A CASE BETTER THAN A LAWYER WHO'S BEEN PRACTICING FOR 40 YEARS."

HOW TO TRY A CASE

telling me to stop. That's just the fucking farthest thing from the truth. As my homeboy, how you gonna put somebody on the stand whose lie could put me behind bars for 25 years?

Where were your lawyers in all of this?

Murray Richman is supposed to be one of the best lawyers; he helped Jigga, he got DMX off. But he was trash. He did nothing in comparison to Combs's attorneys, Benjamin Brafman and Johnnie Cochran. They were just asking commonsense questions, but Richman wasn't even making sense, man. Like he was smoked out or something.

Did you confront him?

Yeah! I was like, What the fuck are you doing?! I couldn't even speak to this nigga after the first couple of days of testimony. After that, Ian Niles took over.

Are you still angry at Puff about the trial?

I got two eyes: the metaphysical and the material. Right now, I'm on some metaphysical shit, like this happened for a reason. I'm extraordinarily blessed. My career ain't destroyed, and the love I've been getting from the people is unimaginable.

But the material eye wanna pop his top, because this shit didn't just affect me. It affected my mother and my grandmother, and it could have destroyed my livelihood. More than that, it could have been prevented. All he had to do was tell the truth.

What's the truth?

He could have just said: "Matthew 'Scar' Allen was arguing with us and threatening us. One of his doggies pulled out, and then I pulled out in self-defense." That's all he had to do.

Niles was unavailable for comment. For his part, Richman contends that Shyne stymied his own defense. "I have no allegiance to Puffy, and nobody took a fall. If you're looking to find fault as to why he was convicted, stop and think of what the evidence showed, then come to that conclusion. Here was a 21-year-old man thinking he knows how to try a case better than a lawyer who has been practicing for 40 years."

Combs feels that he is being scapegoated along with the attorneys who worked on Shyne's case. "He chose his own lawyers," Puffy says. "I didn't know Ian as a criminal lawyer. He asked me to pay for his legal fees, and I did. But I did not consult him on which

lawyers should be chosen except when I offered my legal team to work on both our cases, and he said, which I could understand, that he didn't want that."

Combs also maintains that the lawyers tried to work together to support each other. And as for the duty to retreat statute, Diddy says: "I never went on record that he wasn't a friend or anything like that. Besides, no lawyer said, 'Can you please make it a point to say he's your friend.' That never came up."

Last spring, Shyne enlisted Charles J. Ogletree, the Harvard Law professor and trial attorney who secured Tupac's bail release from Clinton. At press time, Shyne has two options pending for an early release. The first is an appeal that, according to Ogletree, details "multiple examples of error in the case" that prevented Shyne from presenting a viable defense. The second is a motion that includes what Shyne calls "bombshell evidence" of an alleged romantic relationship between a key witness and a woman who worked for the prosecutor. "The goal is for Jamaal to get this conviction reversed and get a new trial, so he finally has a chance to present the substantial evidence that could create a different result," Ogletree says. Both attorney and client are optimistic, with Shyne predicting he'll be out on bail at worst by the end of 2004.

So what are you going to do the first day you get home?

I'll pay moms a visit and go to the studio. I got damn

near 10 albums to put down. And this ain't about me coming out and being the biggest superstar; it's about making this music and, hopefully, affecting people the way Bob Marley and 'Pac did.

So after you leave the studio, then what?

I'm not gonna leave the studio. There's a lot of records to be made.

Did this environment force you to become more spiritual?

Being here just magnified what I really was. I've gone through so many different phases trying to understand the Most High, from Islam to Christianity. But what the Hebrews talk about just simplifies everything, it's just the Most High and you, there's no intermediary.

Have you ever asked God why he chose this path for you?

The Most High took me from Flatbush, Brooklyn—from my moms scrubbing other people's toilets and me sleepin' on a couch till I was 17—to a record deal. So I can't complain now. There's motherfuckers in here that got natural life. When I look at their burdens, my load doesn't look so heavy.

If this is indeed a journey, are there any unbearable moments?

Don't get it twisted or tangled, it's serious. Being here is like walking on clear water, and hell is beneath. I see the fire burning, I see motherfuckers being tortured, but I can't look down. I can only look up—and ahead.



STAND UP: (Left) Shyne suited for the 2001 trial that led to his incarceration; (right) celebrating the release of his debut LP with Puffy in 2000.

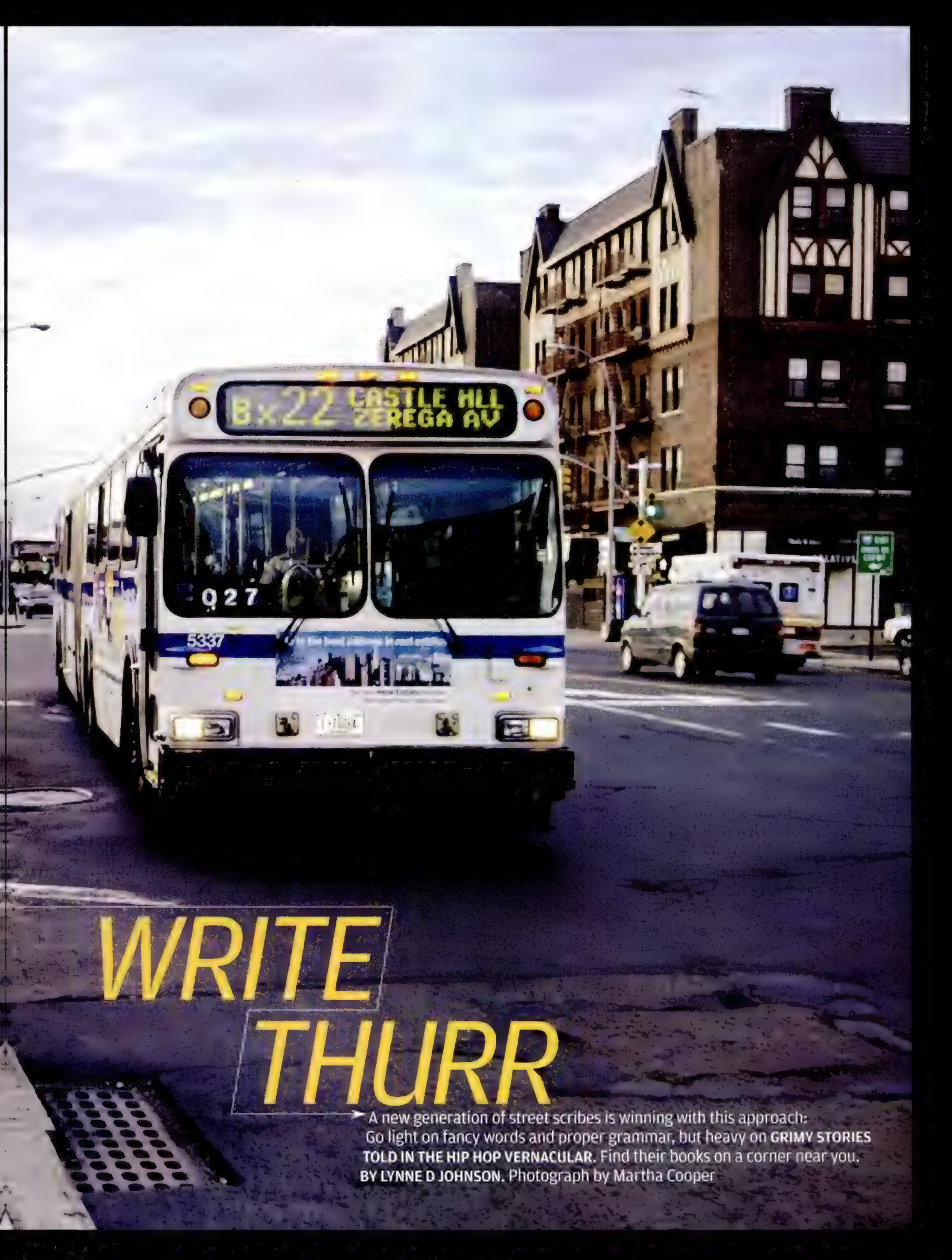
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WRITE THURR

➤ A new generation of street scribes is winning with this approach: Go light on fancy words and proper grammar, but heavy on GRIMY STORIES TOLD IN THE HIP HOP VERNACULAR. Find their books on a corner near you.
BY LYNNE D JOHNSON. Photograph by Martha Cooper

f you live in the 'hood, you've probably seen them—young men and women riding on the bus or train reading books with titles like *Gangsta*, *Caught Up*, and *A Hustler's Wife*. For many, it's the first time they've ever read a book outside of school. Laquaner Richburg is one of those people. // An 11th-grade dropout and mother of three sons, Richburg, 29 (who later earned her GED), wasn't interested in street literature until she read *The Coldest Winter Ever*, by Sister Souljah. Then she got hooked and wanted more. "It was more real than any book I'd ever read," Richburg says. "I was like, Oh my God, that was like Keisha from down the block. I couldn't get enough. Then I read *True to the Game* and *B-More Careful*. No book caught my eye like that." // Souljah's book filled a void in African-American literature that the

publishing industry didn't realize existed. Young people wanted stories about the black experience, the kinds of stories once told by Iceberg Slim and Donald Goines. Souljah's book, published by Pocket Books, achieved critical acclaim; meanwhile, a self-published cadre of underground writers was emerging to stake its claim in what was becoming the street lit genre.

"I owned a bookstore, and people kept coming in asking for certain kinds of books," says Carl Weber, 38, author of *Player Haters*, *A Dollar and a Dream*, and *Baby Momma Drama*, and the publisher of Urban Books. "They wanted edgy and gritty, filled with drama. And they wanted stories about real people."

In 1994, Teri Woods wrote *True to the Game*, a novel about the drug culture of inner-city Philadelphia in the late '80s, and submitted it to publishers. With no takers, she desktop-published the book and peddled it on the streets herself. After its success, she launched her own publishing company to reach a larger audience.

At the time, major publishers were ignoring these graphic street novels and their authors. "If you look at the makeup of publishing houses—almost always white, middle-aged, and middle class—they usually run to avoid this world," says Manie Barron, 48, the first black literary agent at the William Morris Agency. "With an antihero succeeding, they felt it was the glorification of the lifestyle. But no, it's the reality for some of us."



STORIES TO TELL:
Hot titles in the hip hop-fiction game.

For authors like Vickie M. Stringer (*Let That Be the Reason*), K'wan (*Gangsta*), and newcomer Relentless Aaron (*The Last Kingpin*)—all of whom have served time in prison—writing is cathartic and, ultimately, a means to make a way out of no way. "Some of the people write street books to glorify it," says K'wan (aka K'wan Foye), 27. "I wanted it to

ORIGINAL GANGSTERS

This first wave of hustling writers turned their hard-boiled experiences into unflinching street fiction.



< CHESTER HIMES (1909–1984)

The oldest and most respected of the street lit scribes, Himes began publishing his pulp fiction in newspapers and magazines during an eight-year bid for armed robbery. After his release in 1936, Himes, who was originally from Jefferson City, Mo., immigrated to France, where he became a contemporary of James Baldwin and Richard Wright, and where his tales of the black underbelly were hailed as great literature.

Cult Classic: *Cotton Comes to Harlem* (Putnam, 1965)



< ROBERT "ICEBERG SLIM" PECK (1918–1992)

Arguably the greatest influence on rap's current pimp-centric culture, Chi-town native Iceberg Slim spent more than 20 years in the world's oldest profession before the grind wore him down. In 1969, Slim penned his first novel, which depicted the gritty existence of Chicago's underclass and introduced the hustler's vernacular to the masses. It earned him street lit immortality.

Cult Classic: *Pimp: The Story of My Life* (Holloway House, 1969)



< DONALD GOINES (1937–1974)

Detroit-born Goines enlisted in the Air Force at age 15 and returned from the Korean War two years later with an honorable discharge and a heroin habit. He supported his addiction by stealing, pimping, and gambling. After more than a decade in and out of jail, Goines, influenced by Iceberg Slim, began writing. Working at a feverish, drug-fueled pace, Goines churned out 16 novels in under five years before he was murdered in 1974.

Cult Classic: *Dopefiend* (Holloway House, 1971)

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be real and powerful, but to show the flip side of the game and give a powerful message: This shit ain't for you. How many of your people lose their life to the penitentiary?"

Nikki Turner's passion for writing is also fueled by delivering a message. "These books just come out of me," says the 29-year-old novelist, best known for *A Hustler's Wife*. "I try to have realistic characters and deal with issues that need to be addressed."

For each of these authors, the pursuit of writing is a passion that just wouldn't be quenched until they had actually written something and had it published. Yet Ron Kavanaugh, 42, founder of *Mosaic Literary Magazine*, feels that some of these writers are just jumping on

"PEOPLE WANTED EDGY AND GRITTY BOOKS FILLED WITH DRAMA, STORIES ABOUT REAL PEOPLE."

the bandwagon. "This is an extension of MTV's *Cribs* and *Pimp My Ride*—all of these types of MTV and BET programming packaged in a book," he says. "These authors aren't writing from the heart, they're writing from the pocketbook."

Winston Chapman, the thirtysomething author of *Caught Up!*, disagrees. "You can't do an artistic thing from a business perspective," he says. "Because it'll look like a white kid from Oklahoma trying to do the Harlem shake."

For Stringer, 32, writing had nothing to do with making money. She came home from prison inspired to share her stories. After numerous rejections, Stringer launched Triple Crown Publications and put out her first book. Soon after, she dropped K'wan's *Gangsta* and then Turner's *A Hustler's Wife*. "My story sent me to the pen," says Stringer. "Now it pays my bills. I have 21 writers at Triple Crown today."

Triple Crown has surfaced as a leader within the categories of urban lit, street lit, or even hip hop lit—as major book chains and black book merchants have variously labeled the genre. Weber's Urban Books, Teri Woods Publishing, and even best-selling author Zane's Strebor Books are the acknowledged leaders in the segment. The top five softcover fiction books on *Essence's* Best Sellers list are consistently street lit, indicating that the genre appeals to a large sector of African-American readers. Triple Crown has 14 titles in print and has sold more than 300,000 books in 14 months.

Finally, after several profitable years, highbrow publishers like Simon & Schuster Riverhead and St. Martin's Press are taking notice, and have inked deals with Stringer, K'wan, Turner, and Shannon Holmes, among others. Most of the deals are for a reported six figures.

Simon & Schuster's Atria imprint distributes Zane's Strebor Books and is considering a similar deal with Triple Crown. On the other hand, Relentless Aaron and Crystal Lacey Winslow, 25, author of *Life, Love & Loneliness* and *The Criss Cross*, have chosen to remain independent. "I don't want anyone saying anything about my characters," Winslow says. "I want total creativity. It's the best thing for me."

For loyal readers like Richburg, it doesn't matter if these novels are published out the trunk or through a major house, just as long as they continue to keep it real. "These books are true to the girls who are trying to go out with guys who have money, girls with their families involved in drugs," says Richburg with wide eyes. "It's like living in any ghetto in America."

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

In hip hop fiction, certain characters spark severe déjà vu. That's because these archetypes keep rearing their heads in different books.



< THE HUSTLE MAN: He's the ultimate antihero. Raised by the streets, this virile ghetto prince uses a combination of intellect, luck, and ruthlessness to climb the criminal ladder. Perched atop his illegal empire, he knows his reign can't last forever. So he vows to get out of the game, but only after his final big score. **See him as:** Quadir in *True to the Game*, by Teri Woods (Meow Meow Productions, 1994)



< THE RIDE-OR-DIE CHICK: This female stands by her man during his trajectory from the top of the underworld to his inevitable downfall. She'll carry his weight, keep his jail commissary tight, and if he meets his demise, send him off to thug's mansion in style. **Catch her as:** Yarni in *A Hustler's Wife*, by Nikki Turner (Triple Crown Publications, 2003)



< THE APPRENTICE: As the boss's right hand, this ambitious underling negotiates major deals and rubs out the competition. Though privy to the best of street-life opulence, he secretly covets his master's status and will pay the ultimate price to strike out on his own. **Discover him as:** Ty in *B-More Careful*, by Shannon Holmes (Meow Meow Productions, 2001)

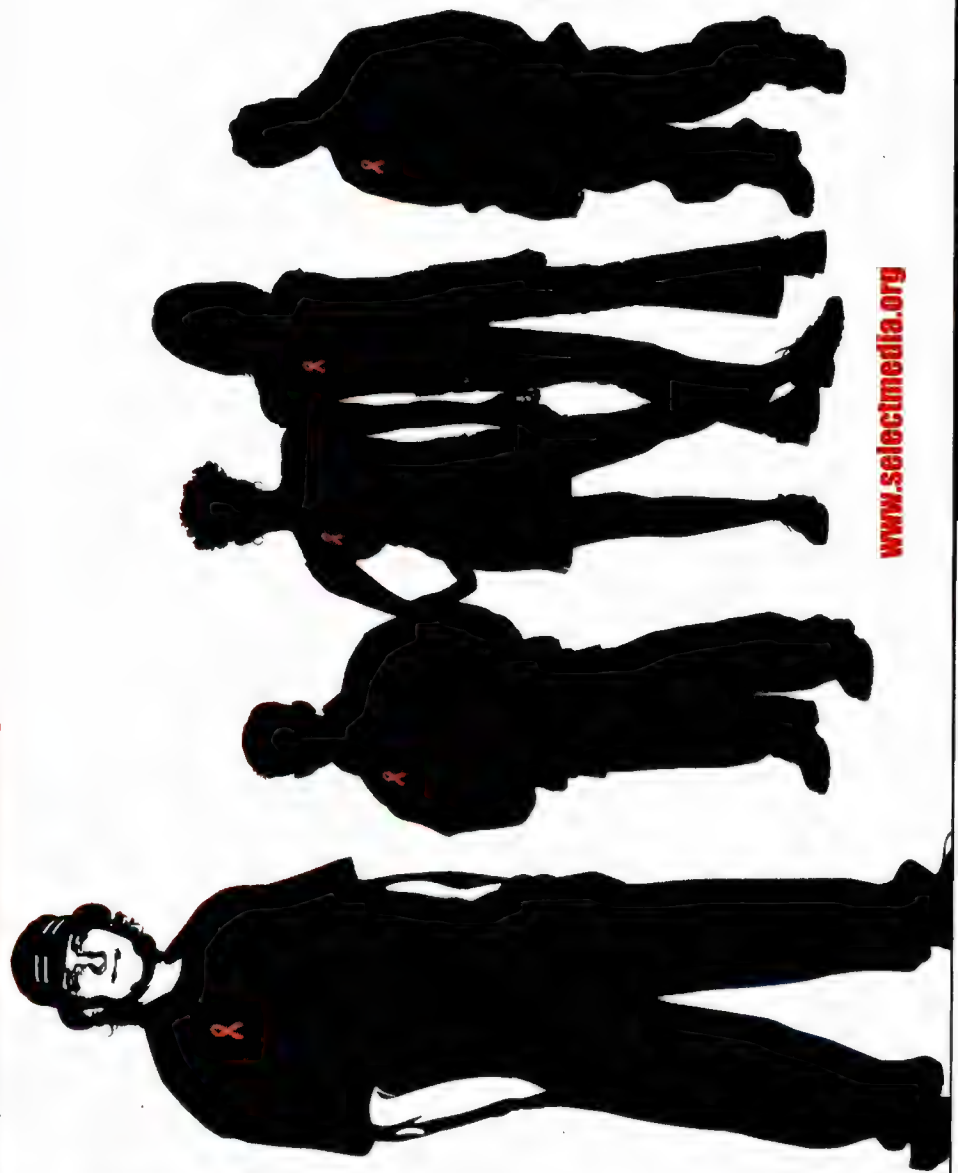


< THE JUMP-OFF: Don't call her a pigeon; she's no ordinary bird. Sexy, unprincipled, and insatiable, she has an unbridled lust for men of power and position that fuels her paper chase. She dreams of landing a major player, but always ends up getting screwed. **See her as:** Winter Santiago in *The Coldest Winter Ever*, by Sister Souljah (Pocket Books, 1999) **I.D.**

2004 POSITIVELY NEGATIVE

HIV & AIDS YOU'VE THOUGHT ABOUT IT NOW WRITE ABOUT IT

HIV. Sex. Condoms. Drugs. Abstinence. AIDS. Personal vulnerability. Tell us your story. It can be real life or made up. Write it down and send it in (5 pages typed or handwritten in ink, double-spaced). Your story must be accompanied by a signed entry form available at www.selectmedia.org. The winning story will be adapted into a 20 minute educational film and the winner will also receive a \$500 cash prize. All non-winners will have a chance to win a computer just for entering. Contest judges include: Elizabeth Avellan, **Morgan Freeman**, Charles OyamO Gordon, Jasmine Guy, **Spike Lee**, Jesse L. Martin, and **Robert Rodriguez**. Entrants must be between the ages of 14 and 22. Submit your story by November 5, 2004 to **Positively Negative HIV/AIDS Story Writing Contest**, Select Media Inc., 375 Greenwich Street, New York, NY 10013-2376. For rules, regulations, and entry form please visit www.selectmedia.org.



www.selectmedia.org

STORY WRITING CONTEST

Rules & Regulations: No purchase necessary. Must be between the ages of 14 and 22 as of November 5, 2004 to enter. Send your story (5 pages typed or handwritten in ink, double-spaced) All entries must be received by November 5, 2004. Select Media Inc. is not responsible for any late, lost, stolen, incomplete, illegible, or misdirected submissions. Stories will be judged at the sole discretion of the judges on the basis of originality, writing style, quality of work, and adherence to the contest guidelines. To be eligible to win, the story must be about HIV. The decision of the judges will be final. Stories must be original and may not be previously published work. The winner and any honorable mention award winners will be notified by telephone and/or e-mail. By entering your story you agree to the rules and regulations of the contest stated. Only one entry per individual. No group submissions allowed. To view the complete rules, regulations, and entry form please visit www.selectmedia.org.





ALL FOR ONE

At a time when New York hip hop is on the outs, Fat Joe and the rest of the **TERROR SQUAD** have a regional plan all mapped out. **KEITH MURPHY** checks the coordinates. Photographs by Mark Mann

know you're going to write about me singing," jokes an animated Joseph Cartagena, 33, minutes after entering Jimmy's City Island seafood restaurant. "But it's been a good week." Indeed, there's something odd about watching a 6'1", 280-pound rapper attempt to take on Patti LaBelle's '80s soul gem "Love, Need and Want You" out of nowhere. But when the guy is the same Bronx kid who crashed the 1993 hip hop party under the menacing alias Fat Joe da Gangsta, the unlikely scene comes off as one of those bizarre Tony Soprano dream sequences. Amid the smooth R&B standards floating from the restaurant speakers (Joe co-owned the posh Bronx eatery with longtime friend Jimmy Rodriguez until mid-June) and surrounded by his Terror Squad crew, the Boogie Down hip hop kingpin has a reason to sing these days. Albeit, off-key.

Having already experienced the spoils of a platinum album (2001's *Jealous Ones Still Envy*) and radio-saturated singles with major R&B players R. Kelly ("We Thuggin'") and Ashanti ("What's Luv?"), Fat Joe is trying to keep the positive energy flowing. His Terror Squad's dance-floor tutorial "Lean Back" is a summer classic.

With that hit, as well as the pavement-pounding "Yeah Yeah Yeah," the Terror Squad—rapper Remy Ma (aka Remy Smith), 23; R&B singer Tony Sunshine (Antonio Cruz), 25; and MCs Armageddon (John Eady), 28, and Prospect (Richard Perez), 23—have a legion of East Coast hip hop heads looking to them to deliver New York City-flavored music into an otherwise Southern and Midwestern climate.

"Maybe it's just Terror Squad's time," says Remy, who also appears prominently on "Lean Back." In April, she helped stir more anticipation for the TS crew after winning a \$20,000 rhyme battle against

MC rival Lady Luck. "It's to the point where I know I can get a seven-figure solo deal right now," she continues. "But I'll probably get half of that because I want to blow up with my niggas."

And Remy's future looks bright, especially considering the precedent set by male-star-endorsed female rappers like Lil' Kim and Foxy Brown. However, the rest of the squad may face a tougher road, because crews touted by major rap figures usually struggle to get props on their own. Members of such groups as the St. Lunatics, D12, and Flipmode Squad have never matched the shine of their leaders (Nelly, Eminem, and Busta Rhymes, respectively). And it's no secret that Fat Joe's shadow is larger than most.

After the untimely death of Terror Squad's iconic rhyme giant Big Pun in 2000, Fat Joe reinvented himself for the MTV set. But when he tried to extend his hit-making mojo to 2002's *Loyalty*, record

"EVERYBODY'S BOUNCING WITH THE DIRTY SOUTH. WE'RE BRINGING BACK THE OLD GRAB-YOUR-D*** HIP HOP."

sales stalled. All of which helps explain the Terror Squad's back-to-basics movement. With the gritty "Yeah Yeah Yeah" and a nod to Nas, "N.Y. State of Mind," TS's latest, *True Story*, is designed to reclaim hip hop for the Big Apple. "Everybody is bouncing up and down with the Dirty South," says Joe. "We love the South and the West Coast to death, but New York has lost its sound and presence in hip hop. Now we're bringing back that old grab-your-dick hip hop."

Tony Sunshine applauds the Terror Squad's grimy, throwback sound. "I come from the pissy elevators. I've seen niggas die and get shot," he says. "I come from that part of the world. I'm from the Bronx. That's what Terror Squad is about."

REGROUP: "With the first album, I had my doubts," says Prospect (far left), with (from left) Remy Ma, Fat Joe, Tony Sunshine, and Armageddon.



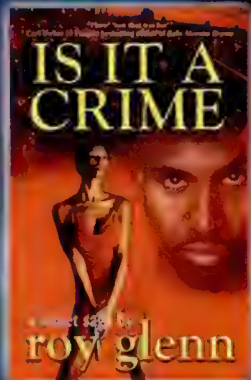
STYLING BY TERRELL JONES. FOR REMY MA: MAKEUP BY JAMÉE MICHELE; HAIR BY TERRENE DAVIDSON FOR ICENHAR.COM. BARBER FOR TERROR SQUAD: JAY BEE. PROP STYLING BY ELIZABETH ENGELHARDT. (PREVIOUS SPREAD, FROM LEFT) ON ARMAGEDDON: SHIRT AND PANTS, BOTH BY DICKIES; T-SHIRT BY UNCLE SAM'S ARMY NAVY. ON REMY MA: SHIRT BY AVIREX; BRA BY VICTORIA'S SECRET. ON PROSPECT: SHIRT BY AVIREX; T-SHIRT AND BANDANNA, BOTH BY UNCLE SAM'S ARMY NAVY. ON TONY SUNSHINE: VEST, STYLIST'S OWN; T-SHIRT BY DR. DENIM; CAP BY SEVENTY NEW ERA. ON FAT JOE: JACKET AND T-SHIRT, BOTH BY UNCLE SAM'S ARMY NAVY. (THIS PAGE) ON REMY MA: JUMPSUIT, BATHING SUIT, AND HAT, ALL BY UNCLE SAM'S ARMY NAVY; BELT BY PEUGEOT. ALL JEWELRY BY JACOB THE JEWELER. ALL BOOTS BY TIMBERLAND.



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Dwayne S. Joseph,
Angel Hunter & La Jill Hunt
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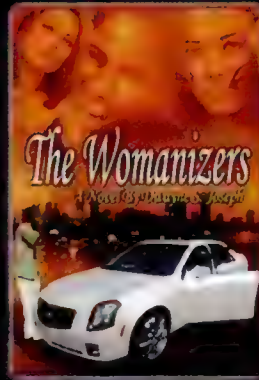
SHE'S GOT ISSUES
Stephanie Johnson
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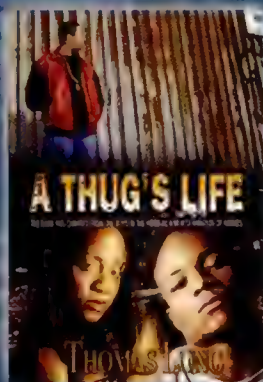
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THE WOMANIZERS
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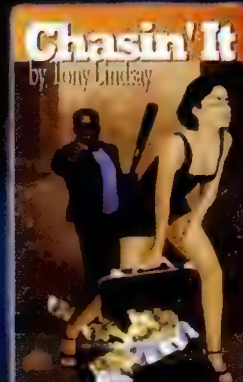
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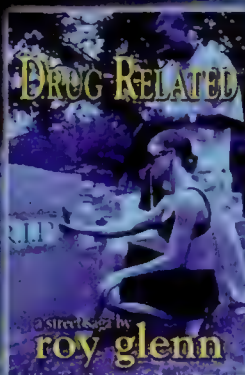


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URBAN BOOKS

W W W . u r b a n b o o k s . n e t

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Flashback to 2000, and the future of the Terror Squad was bleak at best. The group's self-titled album flopped, adding more uncertainty for a crew struggling to cope with the death of Big Pun. MCs Cuban Link and Triple Seis publicly abandoned ship, claiming financial inequities. There was no TS buzz, no hum, just chaos and confusion.

"We kind of ripped fans off last time," Armageddon says of the group's debut. "I didn't know what Joe was going to do in terms of keeping the crew together. But Joe is like my big brother. So I had to stick it out with him."

Remy Ma—who was discovered by Pun in 1999 after an impromptu freestyle at his Bronx home—not only had to deal with the disheartening loss of a mentor, but also rumors of her own split from the Terror Squad. "At the time, I was signed to Loud Records," says Remy. "Out of nowhere, the company was going under. I told Joe, Pun is not here, you've got to step up for us. I was angry at everybody—from my A&R to Joe. But every rhyme that we write, we got Pun in the back of our minds."

When no one seemed interested in a deal that would allow the enterprising MC to release a Terror Squad album through his own label, Joe turned to veteran hip hop executive Steve Rifkind. The chairman of the Universal-distributed Street Records Corp. (SRC), Rifkind was seeing his influential Loud Records absorbed by megamusic conglomerate Sony. A deal was struck between the two hip hop industry underdogs. Terror Squad Records was born.

"When we did the deal, people were looking at us like we were crazy," says Rifkind. "It was the same thing when Loud signed Big Pun without hearing a record. Joe gave his word that this Terror Squad album is going to be great. He didn't have to say that. I would have done it anyway."

When it came time to start production on a new TS project earlier this year, Fat Joe challenged himself and his crew to live up to the

towering legacy of his brother-in-spirit. But like a season of MTV's *Making the Band 2*—Joe playing a frustrated P. Diddy—he couldn't seem to motivate his protégées. "People weren't showing up on time at the studio," Remy says. "Joe basically told us, 'I'm a millionaire. I really don't need this. If this album don't do good, there's no more chances for y'all.' And that's true."

Seated at his table with his wife, Lorena, son, Ryan, and his crew, Joe is dining on his favorite Jimmy's dish—fresh crab legs and steamed mussels. Friends and family make it a point to tell you that the man is all about loyalty. "Joe is a good dude," says Prospect. "He will never let a nigga starve. I've been on a lot of under-

"I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT JOE WAS GONNA DO IN TERMS OF KEEPING US TOGETHER. I HAD TO STICK IT OUT."

ground tracks, and I ripped every track. But I want to come out through this team, if I come out at all."

"Everybody has something to prove in Terror Squad—especially Armageddon and Prospect," says Joe, who, at times, questions their dedication to their craft. "I wanted them to step up more than anybody, but, sure enough, they appear on the album less than anybody. But we are Terror Squad. We don't turn our backs on each other."

Joe tugs at his diamond-encrusted "BIG PUN" chain. He's still trying to keep his good vibe alive. "I'm *not* the nicest rapper on earth," he offers, although many would argue that he's definitely the most improved. "With the Terror Squad, I'm trying to keep the Bronx flag waving. The two biggest things I'm proud of in my life is being Puerto Rican and Cuban, and being from the Bronx, the birthplace of hip hop." On key or not, for Joe and TS, those are praises worth singing. **W**

STEADY MOBBIN' Fat Joe's Terror Squad bellies up against another infamous TS—Tony Soprano and his band of goodfellas. From the Bronx to the Bada Bing, one thing's for sure, no Big Pussies here.



> TONY SOPRANO

Known as: The notoriously short-tempered acting boss of New Jersey's violent DiMeo family. Tony deftly juggles in-house defections, marital strife, and anxiety attacks—with the help of a therapist.

> FAT JOE

Known as: The equally imposing and charming platinum boss of the Bronx's infamous Terror Squad crew. He deftly juggles in-house defections, record industry politics, and a phobia of flying in airplanes.

Edge: Fat Joe. Who needs a shrink?



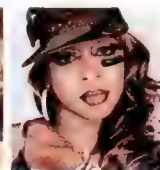
> CARMELA SOPRANO

Known as: Tony's once-estranged wife, whose efforts to divorce her philandering husband were met with his resistance at every turn.

> REMY MA

Known as: Joe's lone female spitter. She was once rumored to want to sever ties with Joe, due to a poor distribution of wealth. But unlike Carmela, Remy has proven to be the boss man's staunchest supporter.

Edge: Remy Ma. About the rumors, she says, "Yeah, yeah, yeah yeah...."



> TONY BLUNDETTO

Known as: Tony's eccentric, out-of-place cousin, who attempted to go civilian as a licensed massage therapist before reverting back to his past life as a gun-toting wise guy.

> TONY SUNSHINE

Known as: Joe's seemingly out-of-place Terror Squad crooner. As resident ladies' man, he displays the R&B-inflected vocal talents that could prove to be Fat Joe's secret weapon.

Edge: While both Tonys display loyalty, Blundetto's reckless behavior made him a liability.



> CHRISTOPHER MOLTISANTI, PAULIE WALNUTS

Known as: Tony's impulsive nephew and loose-cannon capo, respectively. In the past, this cantankerous pair has battled for top-earner position.

> PROSPECT, ARMAGEDDON

Known as: Joe's unheralded lyrical capos. Ascension within the Terror Squad ranks should prove interesting.

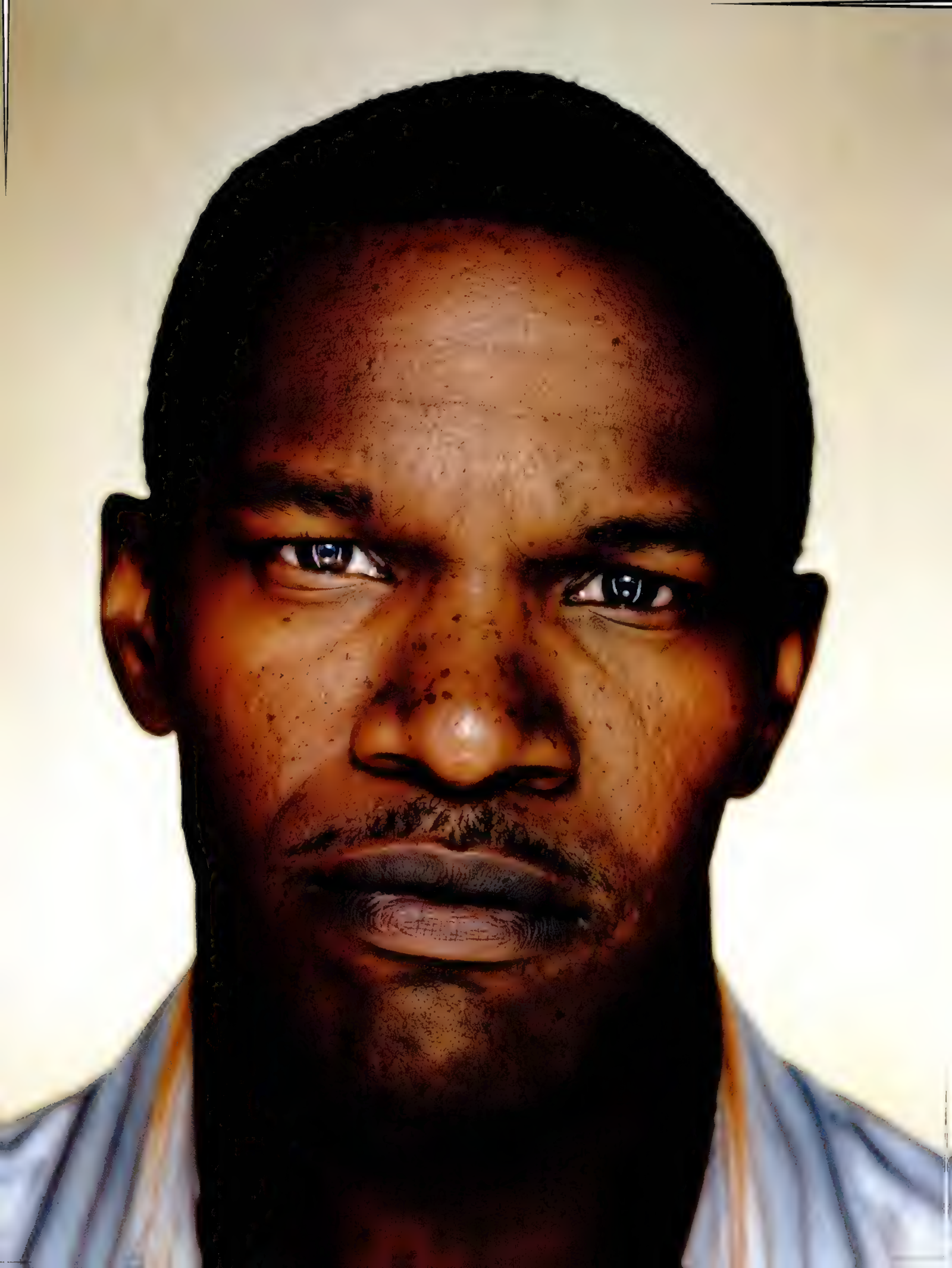
Edge: Christopher Moltisanti, Paulie Walnuts. Loan sharking, extortion, wack jobs, money laundering, unprovoked beat downs...*Fuggetaboutit.*

K.M.



Pelle  Pelle

SECONDA PELLA



Who woulda thunk the sitcom namesake and *Boozy Call* star would become one of Hollywood's next heavyweights? **HARRY ALLEN** cruises in **JAMIE FOXX**'S limo for one wild ride
Photographs by Martin Schoeller

Who woulda thunk the sitcom namesake and *Boozy Call* star would become one of Hollywood's next heavyweights? **HARRY ALLEN** cruises in **JAMIE FOXX**'S limo for one wild ride
Photographs by Martin Schoeller



88 KEYS:
"The minstrel made
the jokes because
there was so much
pressure on his head."

Actor/comedian/musician Jamie Foxx, 37, has consistently demonstrated an ability to find both the humor and the heart in otherwise unlovable, malformed characters, which is one reason why the memory of his recent dramatic turn as jailed gangbanger Stan "Tookie" Williams in *Redemption: The Stan Tookie Williams Story* is still burning holes in critics' brains. But now that Foxx has morphed into legendary pianist and vocalist Ray Charles for the long-awaited biopic *Ray*, costarred with Tom Cruise in the thriller *Collateral*, and won a lead role as Lieutenant Henry Purcell in next year's Air Force thriller *Stealth* ("like *The Fast and the Furious* in the sky," he says), this former high school athlete has become the ultimate four-peater. Or, five-peater, if you count his liquid tenor tones with Kanye West on Twista's smash hit "Slow Jamz." // After stopping by the *Late Show With David Letterman*, Foxx and friends take a riotous, often foul-mouthed limo drive to his hotel. They ascend to a capacious 21st-floor suite—a welcome break, says Foxx, from "New York hotel rooms where you open the door and hit the bed." Once seated, he breaks down the art of channeling a blind singer, getting into character with a box-office hotshot, and distilling the reality of race. As always, his words are both comical...and meaningful.

What would you say if you had to describe your career right now?

I'm in the greatest spot that I could possibly be. I'm able to do anything. The dramatic roles have been impeccable. Every comedian wants to be Tom Hanks or Robin Williams, to take it from just being the funny person to actually doin' a great film.

What attracted you to Ray?

It was an amazing project for me. Ray Charles changed the game. Think about how it is to

be a singing *phenom*, but never be able to see the response. It's weird. I would shoot 14 hours a day with prosthetics over my eyes, even at lunch. Because you can't cheat. Ray Charles couldn't cheat. A man that was blind until he went into the ground, and me just blind 14 hours outta the day, gives you a different respect for it. So, therefore, the character is not impersonation; now it's nuance. It pushes you down into what the character is: how he orders food, how he talks to his woman, how he whispers in his baby's ear,

how he whispers to himself fallin' asleep. 'Cause you can't open your eyes, so you fall asleep a lot. Having to keep stimulation goin' on at all times, that's why the drugs and the influx of women.

Did knowing that he was so sick give you a sense of urgency about the film?

Nobody knew that Ray Charles was sick when we did the movie. They kept it under wraps for a long time. We found out just a few months ago that he was ill. And then they shielded him because they didn't want him to be seen like that. So we just waited. We sent gifts to let him know that we were thinking about him. I know Quincy Jones sent CDs of voice greetings. I talked to Ray's son, and he said he was just trying to make sure he was comfortable.

How do you think Ray Charles will be remembered?

Ray Charles taught Quincy Jones about music. So these guys like Puffy, Jermaine Dupri, Babyface, Teddy Riley, everybody who ever started out as producers, they took from the fabric of Ray Charles. If you could call it sampling, Ray Charles took gospel and turned it into rhythm and blues by using the same chords you would use in church and

singing what you were talking about on Saturday night. So, whenever you trace music back, it goes all the way to Ray Charles.

What's it like working with Tom Cruise?

Incredible. Because he wants to make a movie and he wants to be great. He's more prepared and knows his script better than anybody. So we hit it off, because we both achieve to be great. I set out to be, uh, a different kind of great: to be able to allow the great ones to still be great. And that's a different kind of thing. That's an energy thing, and dealing with Tom, we were talkin' about all *types o'* issues. Like, I taught him what "playa-hatin'" was. He was goin' through

some stuff, and I used the term, and he didn't know what it meant.

How'd you explain it?

I grabbed him around the neck and said, How close am I to you right now? He said, "You're pretty fuckin' close." I said, Now, imagine I'm your blood brother, or one o' your good friends. And all the blessings are being passed out in the universe. And you get the good looks, charisma, career, the ladies, everything. And it misses me, by half an inch. *I will always subliminally hate you*, because I feel if I had only been standin' just a coupla inches over, it woulda got me. That's what playa-hatin' is.

And I said, Now, *you're* the light. Every-

body else around you is *moons*, meanin' that they wanna be next to you, because the moon doesn't shine unless a light shines on it. This is how you protect that light—you set yourself up like the Pentagon. So, at the end of the day, who do you trust?

And he said, "Uh...um..."

I asked again. I said, Who you lookin' at? You're lookin' at yourself. As long as you can view yourself in that mirror and be comfortable with what you see, and not look left and right, you'll never be on *El True Hollywood Story*, and you will always have that passion, and you will always have your light.

What was Terrell, Texas, your hometown, like?

It was a racial place to grow up. The railroad track separated the city, therefore, separating the culture and the mind-set. What's the separation for? Race. One side looks better than the other. Paved roads on the north side. Not-paved roads on the south. Food, gas, shelter, lodging on the north side. Nothing on the south. You get told, "Don't be over here on the north side, you're not good enough." Yeah, it's okay when you're playing football and basketball. But certain other places, you can't go. Things, you can't do.

How did this affect you?

You know that racism comes from white people. 'Cause every time I hung out with white guys, you know, I was cool, until I turned my back. Then I was a nigger that was maybe out to get with one of they women.

I think Howard Cosell once said that in sports, the most significant development of the 20th century was the effect of the black athlete.

In a similar sense, what do you think black comics add to entertainment?

Well, comedy comes from slavery. Comedy comes from what we hated. The funny guy, the minstrel, made the jokes because there was so much pressure on his head. He made jokes about the master and the overseer. Had to make 'em laugh, because people were dyin'. People gettin' hung. It was a survival mechanism. Wrap it up in a laugh. But in that laugh, there was a pill.

It almost sounds like what you're saying, in a certain sense, is this: Comedy comes from pain. And who has experienced more pain than black people?

You know somebody?



Young, Gifted, and Black

It takes more than hair and makeup to exhibit the range of characters that Jamie Foxx has under his multitaled belt.



LADIES FIRST: Wanda the Ugly Woman in the sketch comedy show *Living Color* (1990)



SNACK DOWN: Popcorn love for the braided Bunz in *Booty Call* (1997)



CONTACT SPORT: Willie Beamen forces Al Pacino to reassess in *Any Given Sunday* (1999)



SIDEKICK: Drew "Bundini" Brown's got Will Smith's back in *Ali* (2001)



MASTERMIND: Foxx Crip walks in *Redemption: The Stan Toookie Williams Story* (2004)



BANDLEADER: Foxx bears an uncanny resemblance to Ray (2004)



THE

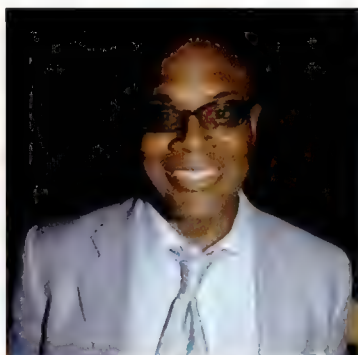
BRO

KEEN

Will the hirings and firings of industry honchos, massive layoffs, and a lean, mean approach to the music business save troubled major labels?

KENNETH LI checks out the new view from the top. Illustration by Tavis Coburn

FACTORY



MUSICAL CHAIRS: (From left) Lyor Cohen, the new Warner honcho; Sylvia Rhone, who's headed for Universal Music Group; LA Reid, now in command at Island Def Jam; and Clive Davis, back in favor at BMG.

From the sidewalk at Atlantic Records'

office in midtown Manhattan, it looked like a power outage in slow motion. "I was actually stunned," recalls one executive who was laid off from the label that Ray Charles, John Coltrane, and Aretha Franklin once called home. // One by one that March afternoon, division heads were summoned to a temporary office, where Lyor Cohen, the newly minted Warner Music Group CEO of U.S. Recorded Music, handed out exit packages that reportedly amounted to about three weeks of severance pay for each year of employment. He thanked them for their service and asked that they break it to the rest of their troops before packing up to leave. // Warner Music Group was sold by media giant Time Warner Inc. to Edgar Bronfman Jr. and a coalition of financiers for \$2.6 billion late last year. The deal closed

on March 1, 2004, setting off a chain reaction that has rocked the \$32 billion music industry ever since. And Cohen, 44, the former head of Island Def Jam, who helped transform rap from a street-corner pastime to a multibillion-dollar cash machine, wasted little time cleaving through the fat at Warner's major East Coast music divisions.

The massacre started on the 29th floor, then went down to the 28th, and continued on the 25th. "We were looking at each other like we don't know what our future is," recalls the Atlantic exec, a 10-year veteran. "Our boss just got let go, what are we gonna do?" By the end of it all, they were both gone.

"Less is more," says Cohen,

whose knack for grooming the next LL Cool J, Jay-Z, or DMX is matched by an unflinching toughness in meeting profit targets. So when Bronfman was looking for the right henchman to commandeer a comeback, he found Cohen. At Island Def Jam five years earlier, he had melted a bloated roster of 274 pop and rock artists down to 29. And Def Jam cofounder Russell Simmons, 46, one of Cohen's closest friends, agrees that today's ailing record companies require similarly

strong medicine. "They need to restructure," he says. "There are a lot of bodies where they don't belong."

That much was clear by late 2003, as the industry capped off three consecutive years of progressively lower album sales—accelerated by illegal Internet file-swapping—that set off the current chain of mergers, purchases, layoffs, and new ventures. Since then, the newly independent Warner Music Group has slashed more than 1,000 jobs and cut executive salaries by as much as half as part of a plan to trim more than \$200 million in annual costs. Those cuts include dumping roughly half of the artists from its East Coast roster this year. Say good-bye to Stereolab and Third Eye Blind.

Marginal and younger artists are getting dropped, and well-established names are jumping labels. And those who sit tight are watching their studio- and video-production budgets shrink. Although business perked up in the first half of 2004, some believe the industry has little chance of attaining its historical highs of the late '90s. "Even if it comes back to the sheer unit numbers of four, five years ago, it won't bring it back in terms of dollars," says Ken Schlager, executive editor

of *Billboard*. "It may never get back to the peak levels of the past."

The industry's woes have begun to affect the very process of recruiting, producing, and promoting the next generation of artists. In the old days, one hit could redeem a roster of clunkers. In the new world, that one hit, or even several consecutive ones, can no longer save an exec's job.

Just ask former Elektra chief Sylvia Rhone, who spent nearly 25 years overseeing many artists' careers, including those of Missy Elliott and Busta Rhymes. She learned of her firing from Warner in the *New York Post*. "The surprise for me was not what happened but *how* it happened," fiftysomething Rhone says in her first interview since the dismissal. There's no doubt that some standard ways of doing business are falling by the wayside.

"The old model that doesn't work right now is giving the artist a shitload of money, them delivering you a single, and then not selling any records," says Steve Rifkind, 40, former head of Loud Records, whose roster once included Wu-Tang Clan and Mobb Deep. "The new model is you still give the artist money but don't accept the album until you have more than three singles." Rifkind inked a deal with Universal Records in March 2003 to form Street Records Corp.

A quick round of executive

moves followed Cohen's jump to Warner last January. Within weeks, Antonio "LA" Reid, 48, who had been let go by BMG's Arista Records in the same month, was tapped to replace Cohen at Universal's Island Def Jam division. Three other top execs—Rhone; Val Azzoli, cochairman of Warner's Atlantic label, who helped broker the deal to take Sean Paul to the big leagues; and Atlantic copresident Ron Shapiro—were also handed their walking

papers in March.

If these changes were aimed at resuscitating profits, then the chair swapping at the top ranks left many wondering why labels were turning to the same cast of characters whose years of profligate spending—on bloated video productions, irrational tour expenses, exorbitantly paid glam squads—helped undermine profits in the first place. “When things aren’t going well, the guy who gets shot is the guy at the top,” says Strauss Zelnick, 47, a former CEO of BMG. “And then they look around afterward and ask, ‘Who can run this?’”

The answer? Well, maybe it is the same old guys. A few blocks away from Warner, Clive Davis, the 71-year-old exec, suddenly found himself back among the elite as chief of BMG North America on February 2. It had been less than four years since Zelnick shoved Davis aside at BMG’s Arista, the label Davis founded in 1974. He was replaced with younger blood, his onetime colleague LA Reid, in 2000.

But within 24 hours, Zelnick had agreed to bankroll the launch of Davis’s J Records with \$150 million and to release 10 of Arista’s artists to J. By 2002, Davis’s protégée, Alicia Keys, landed five Grammys.

“I feel that the role music plays is as vibrant as ever,” Davis says today. “I for one am doing nothing different.” Through virtually four decades, he has outlasted and outlasted many of his contemporaries, never breaking a sweat in his trademark turtlenecks and tinted aviator shades. His next trick? “I will be in the studio with Whitney Houston,” Davis says. A lot rides on Houston, who has grappled with substance abuse, a dysfunctional marriage to Bobby Brown, and being the butt of jokes on *Mad TV*, to say nothing about a career that hasn’t seen a bona fide hit in years. For Davis, Houston’s return to the charts would be delicious after the lackluster sales of 2002’s *Just Whitney...* at Arista under Reid’s watch.

LA Reid’s ascent at Arista in 2000 was met with some cold shrugs from the industry at first. What place did this young, dapper African-American with the black-rimmed specs and R&B roots have in the world of rock and pop? Reid soon earned his stripes by reinventing Pink as a pop goddess, signing Avril Lavigne, and watching OutKast soar to mega-multiplatinum sales and even a Grammy for Album of the Year.

In fact, Reid’s label roped in 31 Grammy nominations during his last year. “LA worked wonders,” says Pusha, 27, of the Clipse, who was moved to Jive as a result of the Arista shake-up. “The OutKast project was his brainchild. I think Usher’s album was as well.”

Reid has plunged into his new tasks at Island DefJam—chief of which is looking for the Next Big Thing—but speaks tersely about

how his last gig ended. “I really felt my work was complete at Arista,” Reid says. “I left the company in amazing shape, but I was asked to step down.” And following Reid’s departure, the music stopped for the majority of Arista’s employees, who were either let go or reassigned in the BMG-wide reorganization. OutKast and Usher moved to the Zomba Label Group—and Arista was eventually restructured with a leaner roster and a new

THE BIG FIVE

Check out which labels your favorite artists call home.*



* At press time

senior VP of A&R, Jeff Fenster.

How could such a celebrated music executive, who nailed hit after hit, suddenly lose his gig? It came down to this, apparently: All the multiplatinum albums did not prevent Arista from reportedly losing well over \$100 million over two consecutive years, due in part to the \$100 million, multialbum deal the company signed with Houston in 2001. And execs whose companies lose that kind of checkbook don't tend to be kept on.

Still, there will always be a record company willing to pay for a proven set of ears. It was less than a month after exiting Arista that Reid reemerged at IDJ with a reported three-year contract for \$10 million.

Industrywide, the turmoil is far from over, insiders say. Sony Corp. has finalized a fifty-fifty joint venture with Bertelsmann AG (which owns BMG) that will merge their music divisions later this year, pending government approval. "Clearly, you'll have more layoffs," says Donald Passman, author of *All You Need to Know About the Music Business*. "The whole idea of doing the merger is to get rid of overhead."

For consumers, the profit imperative could lead to even more banal tunes. Large media conglomerates are more inclined to back acts that reach the largest possible audience. "Over-

all, it damages the quality of music we get to hear," says Mark Anthony Neal, author of *Soul Babies: Black Popular Culture & the Post-Soul Aesthetic*. "It's no longer about allowing an artist to develop their own audience."

Schlager agrees: "There's going to be emphasis on a sure thing and fewer chances taken in the signing and development of acts. It's less likely that labels will stick with an act or build it slowly over two or three albums. That's where the brilliance of executives will come into play."

Analysts say early signs are looking up. Overall music sales were up 9.1 percent in the first quarter of the year. Corporate spending is down; layoffs are generally slowing. Part of the turnaround may be due to the industry's united efforts to stamp out online piracy. Since September 2003, the Recording Industry Association of America has sued more than 3,000 suspected thieves, among them children, senior citizens, and college students. At the same time, label chiefs are earnestly honing in on finding new ways to get consumers to pay for music online. "It's true that the recent mergers and acquisitions have reduced head count," says Rhone, "but the good news is that consumers still want music to be part of the fabric of their lives."

Digital music sales are playing a role in

the turnaround, says Schlager, pointing out that 99-cent tracks from services like Apple's iTunes Music Store have helped rejuvenate the CD-singles industry. By late June, the industry had sold 51.2 million tracks online, compared to 3.8 million singles sold at retail during the same period, according to Nielsen SoundScan figures.

"Downloads could be one of the best promotional vehicles out there," says Rifkind. "We have an artist named Akon with a song that's not on his album, and we gave it to the Apple iTunes store. And it's creating great exposure for us." Another emerging cash cow is cell phone ring tones: One expert points out that in South Korea, ring tones actually yield more revenue than CDs.

But surviving in the new reality, where music now competes against the Internet, DVDs, and video games for consumers' time and cash, will come down to how a cadre of time-honored hitmakers rekindles a business that gets harder to recognize each day.

By the end of March, with a lighter workforce, Cohen was ready to execute the new strategy. While many labels are driven by a let's-see-what-sticks attitude, Cohen is hoping to recenter Warner as a haven for talent scouts, the ones who suffer through hours of MC battles to find that one gifted lyricist.

It's also a strategy that Reid intends to apply at IDJ. "I believe that signing artists you really can afford to invest the time in has a bigger payout than just trying to sign a lot of stuff," he says. "I like to sign carefully. I like to sign those whom I really feel passionately about, and watch them develop."

By pruning the roster, filling it with a select few top acts, and allowing them to blossom properly, labels are hoping they'll become the houses to which the next Jay-Z will aspire. But in this new climate, quantity and risk are inversely proportional. In other words, if the "less is more" mantra drives the business, it also ups the risk. When an act flops, its impact is much more severe.

In the end, Cohen's, Davis's, and Reid's approaches—finding and developing artists in a grassroots manner—don't appear all that different. It's still about recognizing what the top hitmakers live for: that sheer tingle—the "gut feeling," as Reid calls it—when one spots that diamond in the rough. 

Additional reporting by Serena Kim

THE LITTLE GUYS

Indies fly low and fast to profit in a hostile industry environment.

Independent labels invoke a romantic image as the last men standing, facing down music-industry giants. In reality, running an indie is less a showdown and more just constant hustling. Says Bob Frank, president of Koch Records, the fastest growing "major alternative" in America: "As an indie, we must be entrepreneurs and aggressively opportunistic. You develop and improve or die."

Part of that hustle means having to work harder to gain what majors take for granted. Isaac Bess, general manager for underground imprint Quannum Projects, knows that indies rarely catch breaks. Despite critical acclaim, Quannum's DJ Shadow, Blackalicious, and other acts still have to "make twice the noise of a major in order to be heard," Bess says. "Gaining access to mainstream media, like commercial hip hop radio, is tougher."

The upside? Unlike labels that split their attention among a large stable of artists, indies can nurture a specific act or sound. As founder and president of TVT, Steve Gottlieb has helmed one of the oldest surviving indies since 1985. "Breaking an act has never required more of a determined focus,"

he says. "However, with constant rearranging, the notion of a sustained vision for majors is impossible." One need only look at TVT's success with crunkateers Lil Jon and the Ying Yang Twins for proof of that potential.

Innovation has also helped indies thrive. Koch embraced rather than shunned MP3s as a way to promote music. "We've seen new cash flows develop with iTunes and ring tones," says Frank. Especially as the industry faces declining retail sales and dwindling profits, labels large and small find themselves at a crossroads. While the majors have the power and heft to crowd their artists at the starting gate, it may be the lean, agile independents who are better suited for an unpredictable climate. *Oliver Wang*

Blackalicious's
the Gift of Gab



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ESSENTIAL ALBUMS

Just for a horrifying moment, imagine yourself completely ignorant of the magical world of urban music. You're nothing but a tuneless blank slate. Never fear, VIBE has assembled a list of albums that will teach you the basics. Each represents a generation, a sound, and in many cases, a movement. These selections aren't about the genre's best albums (although in plenty of instances they are), but the ones you must have to make you the well-rounded music lover you aspire to be. Listen and learn!



AALIYAH

Aaliyah (Blackground, 2001)
Released a month before her tragic death in August 2001, this is Aaliyah's greatest musical achievement. With flawless musical production, each song illustrates unusual maturity for the then 22-year-old sensual enigma, with engaging themes that go far beyond the usual pop fare.



A TRIBE CALLED QUEST

The Low End Theory (Jive, 1991)
Just let the music play on Tribe's so-derivative-it's-damn-near-alternative but solidly hip hop second album. Rappers Q-Tip, Phife, and producer/DJ Ali Shaheed Muhammad fearlessly blend jazz with prodigious rhymes. Who could forget "Check the Rhime," Busta Rhymes's turn on "Scenario," or Industry Rule #4080?

AL GREEN



AL GREEN

I'm Still in Love With You (Hi, 1972)

It only took Al Green and producer Willie Mitchell four albums to hone their gospel-tripping, funk-skippping, soul-dripping pop steez to perfection. "I'm Still in Love With You," "Love and Happiness," "For the Good Times," "Look What You Done for Me." This is the album on which Al Green became AL GREEN.



BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS

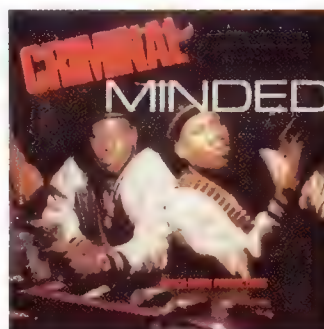
Exodus (Island, 1977)
Bob boasts the perfect combination of political anthems ("Exodus," "The Heathen"); feel-good joints ("One Love/People Get Ready," "Jamming"); and downright moving love songs ("Waiting in Vain"). From start to finish, it has the remarkable effect of making one's world exquisitely simple.



ARETHA FRANKLIN

I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You (Atlantic, 1967)

This is Ree-Ree letting her inner soul child fly high. Backed by the legendary Muscle Shoals posse, *I Never Loved* puts the "E" in electrifying: "Respect," "Dr. Feelgood (Love Is a Serious Business)," "Do Right Woman, Do Right Man," the title song, and the definitive version of Sam Cooke's "A Change Is Gonna Come."



BOOGIE DOWN PRODUCTIONS

Criminal Minded (B-Boy, 1987)

The gangsterisms of KRS-One and Scott La Rock's debut bust shots for all hard-core hip hop. From gunplay and crack addiction to STDs, KRS's gritty "South Bronx" tales over head-splitting beats infiltrated boom boxes across America, confirming that the BX was still number one.



D'ANGELO

Brown Sugar (EMI, 1995)

Please save "neo" for *The Matrix*. *Brown Sugar* was rooted in Prince, Marvin Gaye, and moist Virginia soil. It would be unfair to pull one or two songs out of the bunch, but trust: Play this album today, nearly a decade since its conception, and you'll still get the same fucking feeling. Pun intended.



DONNY HATHAWAY

Live (Atlantic, 1972)

Imagine John Lennon's wistful "Jealous Guy" as a don't-mess-with-me torch song, "You've Got a Friend" as a down-home sing-along, and "Everything Is Everything" as a jazz-swerved roller-skate jam down. Donny Hathaway is justly revered for his three studio albums. But *Live* shows how supernaturally deep the Man really was.



DR. DRE

The Chronic (Death Row, 1992)

Twelve years ago, hip hop stopped like freeze-tag and looked west. Compton's Dr. Dre—with the help of his Long Beach homey Snoop Dogg—proved to be one of music's most compelling producers. Influences from Parliament/Funkadelic, Donny Hathaway, Rudy Ray Moore, and reggae abound as Dre serves up silly interludes about bitches, blunts, and gangstas.



EARTH, WIND & FIRE

That's the Way of the World (Columbia, 1975)

The collective Earth, Wind & Fire of the '70s exudes happiness, unity, and positivity. *That's the Way of the World* coursed effortlessly through a myriad of genres, from rock to jazz to funk to heavy African influences. In their wake, treasures "Shining Star," "Yearnin' Learnin'," and "Reasons" will be mined for generations.



ERIC B. & RAKIM

Paid in Full

(4th & Broadway, 1987)

As one of the most concise rap albums ever, *Paid in Full* represented the future of hip hop greatness. "I Ain't No Joke," "My Melody," and "Eric B. Is President" blew minds as the God blessed the mike in his quest for a righteous life. It was Rakim who spawned modern-day rap heroes Nas, the Notorious B.I.G., and Jay-Z.



ERYKAH BADU

Baduizm

(Universal, 1997)

There was something about Erykah Badu, and it had nothing to do with head wraps or incense. It was the *izm*: a medicine woman concoction of Suth'un sensibility and boundless creative energy. With the precision of a mathematician, and the writing and enunciation of the sensitive, *Baduizm* introduced a true original.



FUNKADELIC

One Nation Under a Groove

(Priority, 1978)

The harmonic convergence of Parliament's R&B love twist, Funkadelic's Hendrix-gloved rock fist, and George Clinton's trickster gist, *One Nation* is party music that makes you think. You got your stank Saturday night jams, your cosmic debris, and a live blast of "Maggot Brain." It don't get funkier than that!



GETO BOYS

We Can't Be Stopped

(Priority, 1991)

We Can't Be Stopped is the most compelling, honest look at Houston ghetto life, and it gave way to the Geto Boys' biggest hit, "Mind Playing Tricks on Me." The album immediately became the soundtrack to the city, making Scarface, Willie D, and Bushwick Bill hometown heroes for their prized gift to hip hop.



GUY

Guy (MCA, 1988)

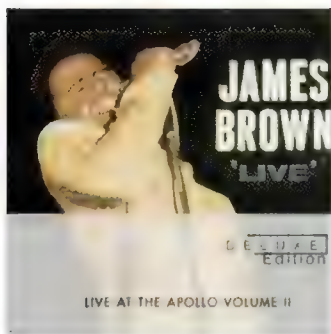
A study of new jack swing by the man who pioneered it. Producer Teddy Riley, along with Aaron Hall and original member Timmy Gaitling, dominated 1988 with this jumping mélange of R&B, hip hop, and dance. The irresistible party jams are timeless: "Groove Me," "Teddy's Jam," "You Can Call Me Crazy," and the sexiest, "I Like."



THE ISLEY BROTHERS

Love Songs (Sony, 2001)

The soothing soul of the Isley Brothers is enough to make anyone feel an overwhelming sense of peace. And with an unreal selection of 13 excellent R&B tracks—including "Groove With You," "Footsteps in the Dark," and "Between the Sheets"—this unforgettable collection might as well be one unending song, lulling us into a long, sweet slumber.



JAMES BROWN

Live at the Apollo Volume II (King, 1968)

This double CD represents the Godfather at his zenith. Disc One builds from a fierce "Think" to a sublime "It's a Man's Man's Man's World." Disc Two's nonstop 30:03 medley of "There Was a Time," "I Feel All Right," "Cold Sweat," and "Prisoner of Love" is every-think crunk aspires to be.



JAY-Z

Reasonable Doubt (Roc-A-Fella, 1996)

Rarely does a work of music evoke such striking images as this album, which is cluttered with emotionally wrought soundscapes and lyrics that conjure up both the Marcy projects' bricked hopelessness and a faraway Eden of women, cash, and calm. Jay's reality and dreams become the listener's own.



THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

Electric Ladyland (Polydor, 1968)

The guitar god's final studio album flows seamlessly through blues-adelic, otherworldly jams, and the Bob Dylan-penned "All Along the Watchtower" and "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)." Experimenting with all studio technology of the day, Hendrix took rock music to its most colorful and artistic level.



JODECI

Forever My Lady (Uptown/MCA, 1991)

A young Puff Daddy recognizes the seductive energy of four young Southern men and packages them as a raw blend of R&B and hip hop. Let the lead (and his brother) sound like the son of Bobby Womack with both heaven and hell in him. Let them beckon, "Come & Talk to Me." Let them ask you to "Stay"—and see if you don't.



JOHN COLTRANE

A Love Supreme (Impulse, 1964)

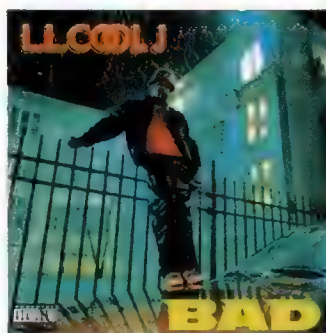
Jazz fan or not, one's taste is uplifted by Coltrane on this trancelike album recorded less than three years before his death. From the first tenor sax wails of "Acknowledgement" to the joyous assertion of "Resolution," the frenzied soul of "Pursuance," and the serenity of "Psalm," Trane's blues-rooted fusion of emotion and spirituality proves irresistible.



LAURYN HILL

The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill (Ruffhouse, 1998)

This former Fugee had the world in the palm of her slender brown hand with the release of her solo debut, never letting anyone forget: This is hip hop. The formidable lyricist with the raspy voice of an angel delicately fused R&B, reggae, and hip hop into one powerful, cohesive piece of work.



LL COOL J

Bigger and Deffer (Def Jam, 1987)

Don't believe those who would argue that LL slipped on his second album. The beats are woofer-shatteringly hard and gritty, but danceable, too. Besides, LL's rhymes on songs like "Kanday," "I'm Bad," and "My Rhyme Ain't Done" combine wit and storytelling, the caliber of which still rings true today.



MARVIN GAYE

Let's Get It On (Motown, 1973)

Throughout his professional life, Marvin Gaye sought to control his inner demons—the sacred vs. the profane—through music. Of all his recordings, *Let's Get It On* fully accomplishes that mission. From the rapturous title song to "If I Should Die Tonight" to "Distant Lover" to "Just to Keep You Satisfied," desire and divinity are one and the same.



MARY J. BLIGE

What's the 411? (Uptown/MCA, 1992)

None of us were prepared for the arrival of the doe-eyed ghetto girl from Yonkers. Because she had lived the realness, she sang just as effortlessly over hip hop as she did R&B tracks ("Real Love" and "You Remind Me"), and the purity of Mary's passion ("I Don't Want to Do Anything," with former flame K-Ci) was undeniable.



MICHAEL JACKSON

Off the Wall (Epic, 1979)

No need to dally here: Michael Jackson's 1979 classic is a study in timelessness. One of the greatest albums ever made by the musical marriage of one of the greatest producers (Quincy Jones) and singer/entertainers ever. The spirit of disco lingers but never dates the sound because of his vocal humility and command, and his transcendent spirit.



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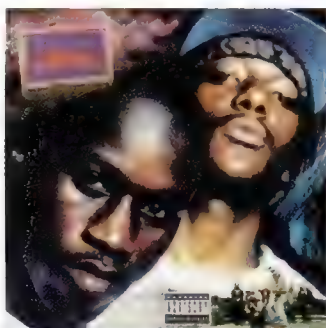


MILES DAVIS

Sketches of Spain

(Columbia, 1960)

Miles's *Kind of Blue* may be the biggest-selling jazz album of all time, but *Sketches of Spain* is the one to grow on. With five classical/folk songs (including "Concierto de Aranjuez" and "Solea") arranged/adapted by Gil Evans, this brooding hybrid of Arab-Iberian romanticism and Afro-blue beatitude is indeed Miles's finest hour.



MOBB DEEP

The Infamous... (Loud, 1995)

For a lesson in Dun-ology 101, this record is required listening. Havoc and Prodigy go on a murderous journey up and down the blocks of Queensbridge. Never has the paranoia from doing dirt and getting bent sounded so real. With killer appearances from Nas, Ghostface, Raekwon, and Q-Tip, it was a raw moment in hip hop.



NAS

Illmatic (Columbia, 1994)

The poetry tumbling out of teenage Nasir Jones's mouth, backed by classic beats from some of the greatest producers ever, is more than just a breathtaking narrative. With epics like "Life's a Bitch," "It Ain't Hard to Tell," and "One Love," *Illmatic* is a desperately important work. The hip hop classic established a new standard for MCs.



NINA SIMONE

High Priestess of Soul

(Philips, 1966)

There's an all-knowing quality to her distinctive, trembling vocals that makes Nina Simone sound like someone who is not of this world. All it takes is one sip from her elixir of blues, gospel, and jazz, soaking such tracks as the spiritual "Come Ye" or the classic "Work Song," and you'll see why she's truly of a different place.



THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.

Life After Death (Bad Boy, 1997)

It has been said that if Biggie's two-disc second album had not been released posthumously, it would not be a classic. We disagree: On this masterpiece, the rap master leaves his Bed-Stuy block to produce a bravely exploratory album of transcendence, redemption, and prophecy. This is a brilliant, detailed, autobiographical adventure.

STAR QUALITY

Five albums some of your favorite artists must have in their lives.



< Patti LaBelle

ARETHA FRANKLIN, *Amazing Grace*
ARETHA FRANKLIN & CURTIS MAYFIELD, *Sparkle*
DONNY HATHAWAY, *Everything Is Everything*
MARVIN GAYE, *What's Going On*
PRINCE AND THE REVOLUTION, *Purple Rain*



< Carl Thomas

GUY, *Guy*
STEVIE WONDER, *Hotter Than July*
STING, *Nothing Like the Sun*
TINA TURNER, *Private Dancer*
THE WINANS, *Introducing the Winans*



< 8Ball of 8Ball and MJG

AL GREEN, *Greatest Hits*
ANTHONY HAMILTON, *Comin' From Where I'm From*
BEANIE SIGEL, *The Reason*
JODECI, *Diary of a Mad Band*
TWISTA, *Kamikaze*



< KRS-One

ERIC B. & RAKIM, *Paid in Full*
DR. DRE, *The Chronic*
ICE CUBE, *Amerikkka's Most Wanted*
PUBLIC ENEMY, *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*
2PAC, *Me Against the World*



< MC Lyte

LUTHER VANDROSS, *The Essential Luther Vandross*
MARY J. BLIGE, *My Life*
NAS, *Illmatic*
STEVIE WONDER, *Songs in the Key of Life*
VARIOUS ARTISTS, *Jason's Lyric: The Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*



< Jermaine Dupri

DR. DRE, *The Chronic*
JAY-Z, *Vol. 2... Hard Knock Life*
JODECI, *Forever My Lady*
MICHAEL JACKSON, *Off the Wall*
RUN-DMC, *Raising Hell*



< Prodigy of Mobb Deep

BIZ MARKIE, *The Biz Is Goin' Off*
BOOGIE DOWN PRODUCTIONS, *Criminal Minded*
MARLEY MARL, *In Control, Vol. 1*
THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G., *Life After Death*
RAEKWON, *Only Built 4 Cuban Linx...*



< T.I.

THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G., *Life After Death*
OUTKAST, *Aquemini*
R. KELLY, *12 Play*
2PAC, *Me Against the World*
UGK, *Ridin' Dirty*



< Amerie

MARVIN GAYE, *What's Going On*
MARY J. BLIGE, *My Life*
MICHAEL JACKSON, *Off the Wall*
NAS, *Illmatic*
VIVALDI, *The Four Seasons*



< Juvenile

DR. DRE, *The Chronic*
GETO BOYS, *We Can't Be Stopped*
JAY-Z, *Reasonable Doubt*
N.W.A., *Straight Outta Compton*
RUN-DMC, *Raising Hell*

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N.W.A

Straight Outta Compton

(Ruthless, 1989)

It will make you gloriously angry, invincible even, as you stomp through America's bombed-out ghettos with a sawed-off in one hand, a mike in the other, screaming "Fuck tha Police" or "Gangsta Gangsta." The Man will cower in fear, your enemies will tremble, the world will crumble at the bass of the title track.... That's attitude.



OUTKAST

Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik

(LaFace, 1994)

The debut album from a clever ATL duo who would alter the course of hip hop. Andre and Big Boi determined the South had something to say, and after emerging from the Dungeon production lab, they said it all, sometimes sang it all—pointedly, funkified, and putting on absolutely no East Coast pretense. Classic.



PRINCE

Sign O' the Times

(WEA, 1987)
Prince is wickedly irreverent about genre lines, at turns pushing hard, uncut funk ("Housequake"), flirting with '60s pop rock ("It"), or just creating uncategorizable lyrical and sonic beauty ("The Ballad of Dorothy Parker"). And on "Adore," he creates a slow jam that feels like a religious experience.



PUBLIC ENEMY

It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back

(Def Jam, 1988)
Chuck and Flav were perhaps the oddest couple in rap history. On their sophomore release, along with Terminator X, Professor Griff, and the SW1, Public Enemy waged a fiery war of words on the powers that be over superior tracks from Hank Shocklee and the Bomb Squad. With this mighty LP, PE birthed a nation of revolutionaries.



R. KELLY

12 Play

(Jive, 1993)
R. Kelly makes sex and love dizzyingly indistinguishable on his first solo album. For all their innuendo, "Bump N' Grind," "Your Body's Callin'," and "It Seems Like You're Ready" are songs that provoke more than just animal instinct; they often evoke that rare feeling of an X-rated night with someone you actually care about.



RUN-DMC

Raising Hell

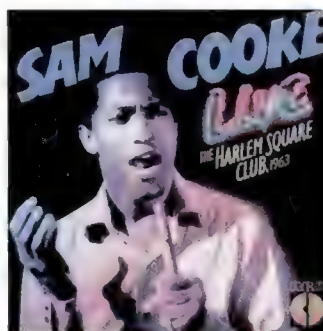
(Profile, 1986)
Even nearly two decades later, you can't help but move at the sound of those first familiar guitar licks from "Walk This Way," the visceral adrenaline rush of "My Adidas," or the sardonic wit of "You Be Illin'." Add enough classics by Run, DMC, and Jam Master Jay, like "It's Tricky" and "Peter Piper," and you'll remember why you love hip hop so damn much.



SADE

Love Deluxe

(Epic, 1992)
Of the five stellar studio recordings U.K. smooove jazz-pop collective Sade has released, *Love Deluxe* dives deepest. Forty-six breathtaking minutes of deliciously sensual rhythms, libido-intoxicating chanteusery, and some of the most pheromone-drenched lyrics ever written ("No Ordinary Love," "Kiss of Life," "Cherish the Day") that make good on the title's boast.



SAM COOKE

Live at the Harlem Square Club, 1963

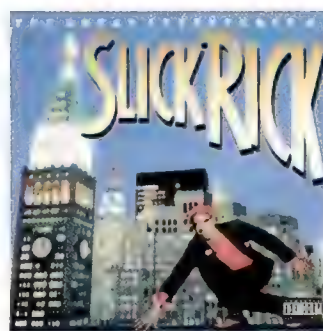
(RCA, 1963)
Sam Cooke has been called one of the greatest voices of his generation. Not only has Cooke's music influenced every soul man since, but he forever set the bar for onstage performance. From "Chain Gang"'s gritty sermonizing to the sweaty carnality of "Bring It on Home to Me," *Live* proves why you can't touch this.



SANTANA

Abraxas

(Columbia, 1970)
From its naked-black-winged angel-astirde-conga-drum cover to the searing guitar solos, soulful organ vamps, and clave-happy percussion breaks within, *Abraxas* has never been equaled. You know the songs: "Black Magic Woman/Gypsy Queen," "Se A Cabó," "Samba Pa Ti." This is a Latin rock masterpiece—and the *blackest* album Carlos Santana ever dropped.



SLICK RICK

The Great Adventures of Slick Rick

(Def Jam, 1988)
On his freshman effort, Slick Rick fulfilled his destiny as the ruler of storytelling. With an unparalleled flow and ultrahip style, MC Ricky D is in top form. From "Treat Her Like a Prostitute" to "Lick the Balls" and everything in between ("Children's Story," "Mona Lisa," "Teenage Love"), this is grade-A, vintage hip hop.

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ANNOUNCE THE WINNER OF THE CHECK YOU OUT CONTEST
Congratulations, CHRIS GORDON of New York, NY, seen here with his
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photos: Marian Barragan



Chris is co-founder of The Morris Media Project and What? Magazine. Chris has won his picture in VIBE, a pair of tickets to a music concert in New York City and a MP3 player - all courtesy of Ford Quality Checked and VIBE. Keep reading VIBE and checking out vibe.com for more great contests!



* Ford, Lincoln and Mercury Certified Pre-owned vehicles only.



STEVIE WONDER

Songs in the Key of Life (Motown, 1976)

We've all got our favorite Stevie Wonder album, but this is the only one you *gots* to take to that proverbial desert island. Stand-outs include "Sir Duke," "I Wish," "Pastime Paradise," "Isn't She Lovely," "All Day Sucker," and the lead song, "Love's in Need of Love Today." Here's to the better things in life.



SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE

Fresh (Epic, 1973)

Sly Stone was a great Black Rock Star. And *Fresh* is his Absolute Masterpiece: Swampy bass, churchy organ, wailing divas, and sleazy guitar-drums-horns under Sly's coke-frayed pipes crooning about debauchery ("Let Me Have It All"), pimping ("If You Want Me to Stay"), and dumb sex ("Babies Making Babies").



THE TEMPTATIONS

Temptin' Temptations

(Motown, 1965)

This album presented the fantastic five at their peak, with timeless singles like "Since I Lost My Baby" and "The Girl's Alright With Me." Anchored by David Ruffin's painfully sweet vocals and the succulent falsetto of Eddie Kendricks, the group was phenomenal before eventually imploding.



TLC

CrazySexyCool (LaFace, 1994)

With this contagious set, T-Boz, Left Eye, and Chilli went from baggy-pantsed cutie-pies to belly-baring femmes fatales, from flava-of-the-month to immortality. Lush harmonies, lubricious grooves, slinky horns, and sensual lead vocals mark this work. The songs "Creep," "Red Light Special," and "Waterfalls" will resonate forever.



TOO \$HORT

Born to Mack (Jive, 1988)

With additions like "Freaky Tales," \$hort's damn near 10-minute song about his sexual adventures, *Mack* was the Oakland-raised rapper's first major-label introduction. \$hort Dog sticks to his already proven formula here: cocky, simple rhymes about the pimp game over bass-heavy tracks. His motto: Pussy makes money. Stick to the business.



2PAC AS MAKAVELI

The Don Killuminati: The 7 Day Theory (Death Row, 1996)

Released shortly after 'Pac died, this haunting collection is enough to make anyone sit back and contemplate the existence of hip hop's troubled hero. The brooding "Hail Mary," the carefree "To Live & Die in L.A.," and the heartfelt "Hold Ya Head" reveal the fury, laughter, and conscience that made him so compelling.



UGK

Ridin' Dirty (Jive, 1996)

Before they were known for big pimpin' with Jay-Z, UGK's sound bounced throughout Southern streets. On their first major-label release, the Dirty South heavyweights didn't lose one ounce of their underground sentiments. Bun B and Pimp C boast a decidedly slower, stripped-down approach to rap ("Diamonds & Wood"), and it worked like a charm.



WU-TANG CLAN

Enter the Wu-Tang: 36 Chambers (Loud, 1993)

Hardrock Staten Island tales and RZA's unorthodox beat schemes reshaped rap. Before Meth knew Red, before Raekwon got a new 'Lo sweater, before ODB was the newest member of the Roc, there was *Enter the Wu-Tang*. The chemistry here between the nine Wu members is priceless and eternally powerful.



THE 2 LIVE CREW

As Nasty as They Wanna Be

(Atlantic, 1989)

With the cover of *As Nasty as They Wanna Be* boasting four perfectly sculpted female backsides, the 2 Live Crew easily lured consumers into their raunchy world. The album overflowed with tales of misogyny, partying, and porn (now commonplace in rap) and had America wishing it could rethink its coveted First Amendment.



8BALL AND MJG

Comin' Out Hard (Suave, 1993)

A mere nine tracks deep, 8Ball and MJG's *Hard* surfaced as a Memphis rap magnum opus. The album is riddled with classic tales ("Mr. Big," "Armed Robbery," and "The First Episode"). Furthermore, the entire disc is produced by the duo, tying each song into a tightly woven package of pimpology.

VIBE GUIDE

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MACKIN'

From the cotton fields of the Delta to the urban streets of Jackson, these young'uns put their own spin on fall fashion. PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMIL GS. STYLING BY JOHN MOORE







● (Previous spread, from left)
Crew top by **Reebok**; jeans by
Azzurè; cap by **Kangol**; sneakers
by **Nike**. T-shirt by **Jamhuri**
Wear; jeans by **Evisu**; hat by
Sean John; diamond watch by
IceTek. T-shirt by **Akademiks**;
diamond watch by **IceTek**;
diamond rings, all by **Cartier**.
(This page) Tank top by **Michelle**
Mason; colorful skirt by **Issey**
Miyake by **Naoki Takizawa**;
patchwork skirt by **Gary**
Graham; earring by **Cody**;
copper and gold bangles and
necklace, both by **Erickson**
Beamon; lizard belt by **Gucci**;
pumps by **Charles David**.
BEAUTY NOTES: To combat brittle
hair, try **Dark & Lovely Moisture**
Seal Deep Conditioner.

A man with a beard and a dark hat stands in a dense, sun-dappled forest. He is wearing a dark fur coat over a patterned blazer, a V-neck sweater, and a polka-dot shirt. He is also wearing patterned trousers and a link bracelet. The background is a lush green forest with tall trees and dense foliage.

● Fur coat, trousers, and bow tie,
all by **VSL Rive Gauche**; blazer by
Gucci; V-neck sweater by **Missoni**;
polka-dot shirt by **Ted Baker**
Global; link bracelet by **Kenneth**
Cole; shoes by **Helmut Lang**.

● Blazer by **Etro**; cashmere knit by **Umbro** by **Kim Jones**; collar shirt by **AJX Exchange**; wool pants by **Yohji Yamamoto Y's for Men**; hat by **Element**; gray reaper bandanna, pocket square, and gold wolf ring, all by **WLVZ**; gold ring by **Stüssy**; shoes by **Paul Smith**.



COME UNTO M
ALL YE THAT LABOUR
AND ARE HEAVY LADE
AND I WILL GIVE YOU R

● Top by **D&G**; skirt by **Y-3**; slides by **Charles by Charles David**; earrings by **Chanel**; bangles by **Tommassini**. T-shirt by **Prada**; white denim pants by **Gucci**; hat by **Element**; bracelet by **Helmut Lang**; diamond ring by **Cartier**; sneakers by **Louis Vuitton**.

BEAUTY NOTES: To get a silky-shine look, use Sothys Energizing Essential Oils Elixir.



● Leather coat by Louis
T-shirt by Blockwear;
jeans by Enyce; ring by Stüssy;
boots by Timberland.
Sweatshirt by WCVZ; wool
sweater by D&G; jeans by
Ralph Lauren; ring by King
Baby; Air Force Ones by Nike



Freelon's

RESTAURANT • BAR AND *Strocks*



● Python jacket by **Gucci**;
top by **Issey Miyake**; skirt by
Naoki Takizawa; leather handbag
by **Cat Swanson**; sandals by
Cortò Moltedo; sandals by
Christian Louboutin.
See THE DETAILS, page 242.





dress

splendor in the

For your next garden tea party don't be afraid to accentuate your assets in a supersexy dress.
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANETTE AURELL // STYLING BY JOHN MOORE



(Previous spread) Dress by **Gucci**; hat by **David Mason for Baby Phat**; necklace by **Carrera Y Carrera**. Black strapless dress and choker, both by **Louis Vuitton**; head scarf by **Echo**; hat by **Michelle Deborah**.

(This page, from left) Strapless dress by **Carlos Miele**; hat by **Philip Treacy**. Black dress, choker, scarf, and hat, see above; heels by **Christian Louboutin**. Strapless dress and fur stole, both by **Roberto Cavalli**; heels by **Gina**. (Opposite page) Dress by **Y's Yohji Yamamoto**; charm belt by **Chanel**; headpiece by **David Mason for Baby Phat**; sneakers by **Adidas**. Halter dress by **Luisa Beccaria**; diamond earrings by **Carrera Y Carrera**; heels by **Louis Vuitton**.







(Opposite page, from left) Dress by **YSL Rive Gauche**; white gloves by **La Crasia**. Dress by **Carlos Miele**; heels by **Gucci**. Dress by **Dolce & Gabbana**; sandals by **Stephane Kélian**; earrings by **José & Maria Barrera**.
 (This page) Velvet gown by **Versace**. Strapless dress, fur, and heels, see page 224; gold necklace by **Carrera Y Carrera**.

BEAUTY NOTES: To keep natural hair moisturized and manageable, use Culture Versatility 7 Day relaxer.



(This page) Gown by **Versace**; necklace by **Love Jewelry Collection**. (Opposite page) Dress by **Christian Dior**; earrings by **José & Maria Barrera**; selection of jewelry from **Ancienne Lucienne** and **RJ Graziano**; pumps by **Christian Louboutin**. See THE DETAILS, page 242.

BEAUTY NOTES: For soft, smooth skin, use NARS Skin Body Smoother Crème to improve texture and give sheen to dry skin.





COMING THIS SUMMER!



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KILLAH SINGLE
"HIGHER"
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KANYE WEST**



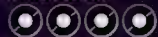
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JILL SCOTT

BEAUTIFULLY HUMAN:
WORDS AND SOUNDS VOL. 2

HIDDEN BEACH

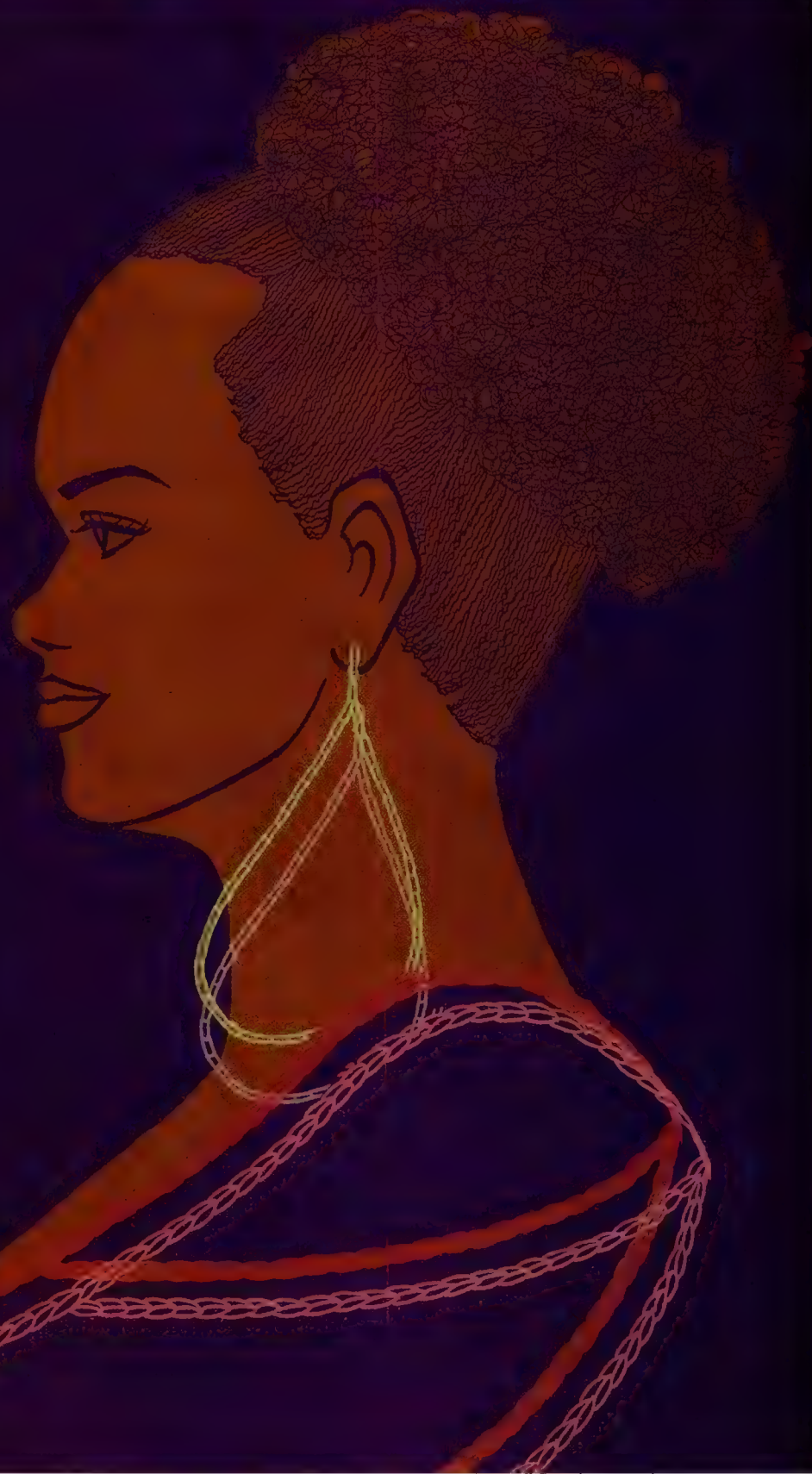


BY LETISHA MARRERO

If the 21st century wants to appoint a musical poet laureate, it's gotta be Jill Scott. Her platinum, Grammy-nominated debut, *Who Is Jill Scott? Words and Sounds Vol. 1*, offered deft poetry backed by jazzy, soulful arrangements that blossomed gracefully like bougainvillea on a vine. And now, as other female vocalists substitute belly rings,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 232)

Illustration by HIROSHI TANABE



butt cleavage, and engineering wizardry for musical artistry, Scott elevates the game naturally with the gentle kiss of *Beautifully Human: Words and Sounds Vol. 2*.

Scott is an anomaly, a throwback to the days when jazz chanteuses ruled smoky Harlem speakeasies. Yet she's both deeply personal and relevantly dope, thriving where poetry slams and hip hop beats collide. Such fusion is exemplified on a track like "Break It Down," where those two worlds seamlessly blend. Like the venerable Billie Holiday, Scott's true instrument is in her expressive tones—mutable, malleable, melifluous. Sure, Alicia's got her keys, but her vocal chops are chopsticks in comparison with Scott.

As the grandest of griots, she imparts tidbits of everyday wisdom. On the spirited lead single, "Golden," she struts proudly, valuing freedom over bling. On the cautionary street-thug tale "Rasool," Scott sermonizes like an omniscient Earth sista, while "My Petition" starts off like an innocent plea to a neglectful lover, until she interpolates the national anthem, revealing her disappointment with the country she loves. Just as cleverly, on "Family Reunion"—a *Soul Food*-like vignette of a dysfunctional

Scott doesn't just ride the beat; she climbs inside it.

clan—she genially narrates a tale of familial foibles washed away by feel-good vibrations.

Unlike a Broadway musical, where folks quixotically break

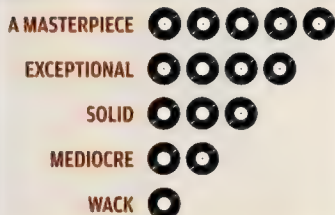
into song at a conductor's cue, Scott sings organically—unearthing the nuanced notes that lie between measured breaths and cadenced words. She has retained the production talents that served her so well on her debut—James Poyser, Ivan "Orthodox" Barrias, Carvin Haggins, Dre & Vidal—and they've adroitly tailored their arrangements to showcase her talents. Scott doesn't just ride the beat; she climbs inside it and effortlessly eviscerates it.

Over the simple piano chords and mellow drum taps of "Cross My Mind," Scott speaks to a sexy ex, recalling how he used to get down. On "Whatever," she expresses the giddy rapture of basking in the sex-funky afterglow, repeating the title in honey-dipped triplets. It's like eavesdropping on an intimate conversation. There's a lesson here for R&B nymphets who get their freak on using obtuse metaphors: It is possible to be utterly sensual without being vulgar.

Though there isn't an outright cluster of catchy singles, the album's most radio-friendly track is "Better at Home," a passionate manifesto on fidelity (which begs for a remix with Mos Def). But who cares if radio gets it anyway? With *Beautifully Human*, Scott puts positivity into today's musical arena—eschewing bitch-and-moan man bashing for compelling rhythms and all-encompassing love songs that resonate in your soul. Pessimists might argue there's an excess of joie de vivre: After all, if

most artists create their best through the pain, where does that leave Scott? Then again, ain't nuthin' wrong with feelin' good. Maybe we'll leave the Tyrones to Erykah Badu, and let Scott lift our souls, give us hope, and make us think. That's some kinda beautiful.

ratings



BEENIE MAN BACK TO BASICS VIRGIN ○○○○

In 2001, Beenie Man accepted a Grammy. And when he shot a video with Janet Jackson the following year, the rules of ragamuffin-crossover etiquette changed. Instead of remixes and celebrity duets, hard-core *riddims* began to infiltrate international markets. But spending so much time promoting his last album overseas caused Beenie to fall out of step with fans at home.

That all changed with the release of "Dude," a big tune on Dave Kelly's "Fiesta" *riddim*, which dominated Jamaica sound systems throughout 2003 and anchors this CD. As the title suggests, *Back to Basics* returns to the time-tested dancehall verities. The only track pro-



duced by a non-Jamaican—Timbaland's "All Girls Party"—doesn't hold up to the homeland sounds from producers like Scatta Burrell and the Shocking Vibes Crew. On "If a Neva God," Beenie thanks Jah for letting him survive the accident that totaled his Hummer last January: "He coulda tek me yesterday," Beenie exults, "but He give me tomorrow." He might say the same for his loyal supporters, who never seem to lose their taste for the "Girls Dem Sugar." *Rob Kenner*

> block busters

Zooming in on the latest music DVDs



BEEF II (IMAGE-ENTERTAINMENT.COM)

◀REW: This sequel reheats storied skirmishes like Ice Cube vs. Cypress Hill, LL Cool J vs. Canibus, and Royce da 5'9" vs. D12.

▶FF: Unfortunately, all Benzino-related beefs have been pulled (under duress?) from the retail copy, leaving less juicy battles in its stead.



DJ DOMINATION—WORLD DOMINATION (DJDOMINATION.COM)

◀REW: The Miami-based DJ's gravity-defying turntable tricks are a sight to behold.

▶FF: The so-called world's fastest DJ may have made the world's slowest-paced DVD. Way too much meandering tour footage, shot with the grainy quality of amateur porn.



THE RAW REPORT VOL. 1 (RAWREPORT.COM)

◀REW: T.I. commands the mike like a preacher in a rambling monologue, where he dismisses supposed beef with Ludacris and DTP.

▶FF: Like a lot of street DVDs, *TRR* stretches the footage like a director's cut. *Donnie Kwak*



MASTA ACE
A LONG HOT SUMMER

M3
 ○○○○

When it comes to punch lines, storytelling, and introspection—the three elements that define good rap albums (but rarely move units)—16-year vet Masta Ace is second to none. And his latest, *A Long Hot Summer*, is another testament to this, as he weaves all of the above over a superb selection of soul beats. Best moment: 9th Wonder flipping Raekwon's "Ice Water" as Ace ponders the state of rap on "Good Ol' Love." Though his singles may not rule radio, as far as full-lengths go, this is how it should be done.

Noah Callahan-Bever

TIFFANY VILLARREAL
TIFFANY VILLARREAL

MOTOWN/UNIVERSAL
 ○○○○

The hubris of most modern songbirds is their reliance on looks—without the pipes to back them up. On her self-titled debut, Tiffany Villarreal proves she's more than just a pretty face. The Raekwon-assisted "Rewind the Time" has a gritty soul qual-

ity reminiscent of Mary J. Blige's "I Love You." And though the overly exoticized "Fire" and the less than "Erotic" fall short, the Mike City-chopped thumping knocks of "You, Yourself & You" unravel Villarreal's distinctive, sweet melisma. Though far from perfect, she's an authentically promising vocalist. And that's more than the average R&B cutie.

Angie Romero

BRAND NUBIAN
FIRE IN THE HOLE

BABYGRANDE
 ○○○○

Brimming with the enlightened lyrics and classic soul samples we expect from Grand Puba, Sadat X, and Lord Jamar, *Fire in the Hole* is Brand Nubian at its revolutionary apex. The moving "Just Don't Learn" bemoans street violence, while "Young Son" portrays a father demanding responsibility from his seed, and "Where Are You Now?" tells the tale of a woman who leaves her jailed lover. Indeed, Brand Nubian's compelling work harkens back to a day when hip hop made you hit the dance floor and contemplate life's realities, all in one beat.

Dan Frosch



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> boomshots

Reggae Riddims & Reality BY ROB KENNER

VP Records, the world's biggest reggae label, celebrated its 25th anniversary in fine style this summer with star-studded concerts in Manhattan and Miami. While Radio City Music Hall provided a suitably bashy venue, Miami's Bayfront Park was a whole different setting for VP's Memorial Day Weekend concert, with a crowd in excess of 20,000 bubbling to extended sets by the likes of Beenie Man, Elephant Man, T.O.K., Wayne Wonder, Lady Saw, Morgan Heritage, Maxi Priest, and Beres Hammond.

"VP Records is a chariot to carry reggae to the next level," said roots crooner **BUSHMAN**, taking a seat backstage after sparking the crowd with hits like "Fire Pon a Weak Heart" and "Call the Hearse," as well as a few selections from his latest album, *Signs*, whose songs explore the war in Iraq, the destruction of the Twin Towers, God, girls, and ganja.

Ever since his first recording, the 1995 posse cut "Remember the Days," Bushman's buttery baritone and thought-provoking lyrics have earned comparisons to the great Luciano. But while



Bushman

Luci sticks to strictly roots reggae riddims, Bushman has been equally comfortable singing over cutting-edge dancehall tracks. Still, he's always brought his traditional Rastafarian values to the bashment beats. "The Bushman are the medicine man, giving

the people the soul food that they need," he says.

And as a half-dozen dancehall models in fur-trimmed thong bikinis line up to go onstage, Bushman reflects on his vision for reggae music's next 25 years. "This business is missing a Bob Marley or a Peter Tosh," he says. "Somebody more radical and vigilant." It's not that Bushman is mad at the commercial success of dancehall, with its emphasis on hedonistic lyrics and frenetic dance moves. But like many reggae fans, he fears that marketing forces may be dictating what music gets made.

"Many people do it for the glitter and the glamour, and they don't really deal with the upliftment of the people," says the hard-working singer as he mops his brow. "We can't just give the people what they want, but what they need."

> Heavy Rotation

VARIOUS ARTISTS *Reggae Gold 2004* (VP)

JAHMEL *Jahmel* (Penthouse)

GREGORY ISAACS *Open the Door* (Ras)

VARIOUS ARTISTS *Riddim Driven: Mad Instruments* (VP)

SLY & ROBBIE *Unmetered Taxi* (Pressure Sounds)

JIN

THE REST IS HISTORY

RUFF RYDERS/VIRGIN



After battling MCs on *106 & Park*, Jin—the first Chinese-American rapper on a major label—almost became a hip hop novelty with his gimmicky lead single, "Learn Chinese." However, on his debut, *The Rest Is History*, the Ruff Ryder displays a multilayered depth with incredibly sincere and honest lyrics.

Jin's Asian roots allow him to bring a perspective not yet heard in hip hop. On "Love Story," the intensity of young romance vies with the upheaval caused by an interracial relationship. The soft acoustics of "Same Cry" are iced out with jewels about Chinese history, and Jin reminds those infatuated with Jordans, "The sneakers on your feet cost 100 a pop / My people get 15 cents a



day in sweatshops."

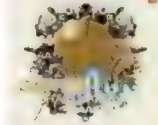
Realizing that folks don't like being preached to, he lightens up, humorously thwarting gold diggers over Kanye West's strings and doubled-up kicks on "I Gotta Love," while "Get Your Handz Off" and "Karaoke Night" recall his cocky demeanor on *106 & Park*.

Despite the overall lack of quotables from the renowned mike ripper, Jin wins the biggest battle of his career thus far by adeptly crafting songs.

Toshitaka Kondo

> indie beat

Notes from the underground



THE GIFT OF GAB, *FOURTH DIMENSIONAL ROCKETSHIPS GOING UP* (QUANNUM PROJECTS)

The front man for Bay Area hip hop collective Blackalicious continues his search for the meaning of life on his uplifting solo debut chockful of playful wordplay.

QUANTIC, *MISHAPS HAPPENING* (TRU THOUGHTS/UBIQUITY)

Precocious arranger Will Holland mashes fiery horns, tasty guitar riffs, and cookin' percussion into his jazzy dance music with a global pulse.

FRANKEE, *THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY* (MARRO)

Backed by hip pop production, this sassy R&B diva sings with both sweetness ("Him") and saltiness ("F.U.R.B. [F U Right Back]," an answer to Eamon's "Fuck It [I Don't Want You Back]").

PLANTLIFE, *THE PLANT LIFE* (COUNTERFLOW)

For boogie nights only, this L.A. quartet's gumbo of soul-disco and cosmic hop spreads a message of love.

Andrew Simon

VIBE

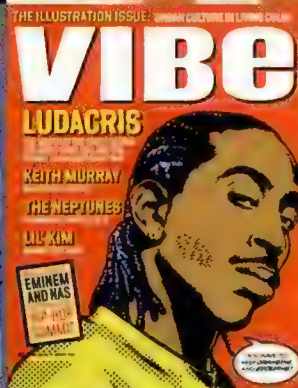
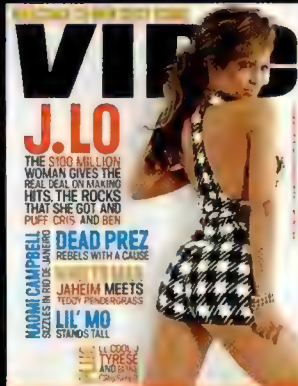
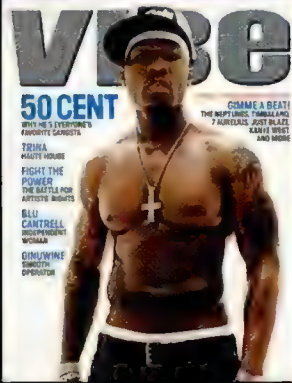
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THE VIBE SPOT



FIRST UP: ARTISTS ON THE VERGE— THE SHOWCASE

Honda Civic Nation, J Records and VIBE hosted FIRST UP: Artists on the Verge—the Showcase at NYC's hottest club, Eugene, to celebrate the release of VIBE's July 2004 issue featuring the FIRST UP special advertising section.

Hosted by Kevin Powell, FIRST UP featured live performances by J Records recording artists Mashonda, Shawn Kane, and Shells, with special appearances by Cassidy, Yung Wun, and Swizz Beats. Music by DJ Dangerruss and complimentary drinks provided by Skyy Sport and Invigor8. Here's what's really good.

DJ Enuff had to call his peeps about the tricked-out Honda Civic.

Derek "Farnsworth Bentley" Watkins checkin' himself out in the ride.

Kevin Powell, Cassidy, and Swizz Beats.

Shawn Kane rocks the mic.

Shells onstage.

Swizz Beats and Mashonda toast the night with Skyy Sport.

THANK YOU TO: Vinode Chand, Nicholas Cruz, Michael Gandolfo, Kenneth Vines, and the entire Honda Civic Nation; Denizen Kane & Universe Neo; Russell "Dangerruss" Jones; Daryle Lockhart (Global Soul Media Group); Biff Warren; Carolyn Williams; Donna Clower and the J Records staff; and Neil Erman and the staff at Eugene and Bodie Entertainment.

PHOTO CREDITS: Ray Tamarra (1-5), Johnny Nunez (6)

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213

THE HARD WAY

TVT



On their long overdue album, *The Hard Way*, 213—Snoop Dogg, Nate Dogg, and Warren G—nostalgically offers its signature G-funk sound. But delinquent timing and a lack of relevant material won't recapture an audience that has since moved on.

On "Joystick," Long Beach's finest rekindle the flame of past glory amid smooth piano accompaniment glazed under the sampled Mtume classic "Juicy Fruit." The Kanye West-produced "Another Summertime," featuring the always enjoyable LaToiya Williams, spreads deep soul vibrations throughout the 'hood. And Nate's melodic crooning on the infectious lead single, "Groupie

Luv," serves as the perfect backdrop for Snoop's and Warren's pimp personae.

But though their overdone macking is readily accepted, 213 is less convincing these days when selling the gangsta image. Tracks like "Run on Up" and "213 Is da Gangsta Click" fail to stir, despite Nate's catchy choruses.

213's obsolete subject matter offsets otherwise satisfying sounds, thus leaving these stars to learn a valuable lesson the hard way: Time waits for no man.

Rondell Conway



> lab notes

Who's doing what with whom in the studio?

The ruler is back! Joined by **Slim Thug** and **Bun B**, T.I. is nearly free from his legal—ahem—obligations and is almost ready to

commence his reign as the King of the South. Meanwhile, fellow ATLien **Killer Mike** is coming out strong with his second album, *Down by Law*. Along with **M.O.P.**, **Three 6 Mafia**, **Jagged Edge**, and **OutKast**, Killer plans a Southern street experience for the masses. Further down I-95, **Trick Daddy** is banking on the production of **Jazze Pha**, **Scott Storch**, and the **Trackboyz** to

make *Thug Matrimony* a true Dirty South classic. Speaking of the Dirty, **Paris Hilton** is set to get crunk with the King himself (**Lil Jon**) as she tries her hand at the rap game with her aptly named album, *Screwed*. And on a less twisted note, **the Game's** highly anticipated release is near completion. Featuring collaborations with **Dr. Dre**, **Kanye West**, and **Hi-Tek**, this debut has the stuff that urban legends are made of.

> live

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GET 'EM HIGH:
Kanye West calls
out the crowd.

Head of the Class

KANYE WEST, June 2, 2004, Hard Rock Live, Orlando, Fla.

In an entertainment industry-savvy town like Orlando, even middle schoolers know not to look at the camera during a live taping. So you can be sure the crowd at the Kanye West show at Universal's Hard Rock Live didn't need anyone telling them what to do at this scheduled MTV shoot.

With all eyes on them, opening act Young Gunz generated some sparks early on with tunes like "Problemz," but then slowed things down a bit for a worn-out Biggie/Pac call-and-response. They then fanned the flames again by calling Hova himself from the wings, hyping the crowd while a mikeless Jay soaked in the screams with near regal serenity. That was one of the few times the volume level taxed the Hard Rock sound system, which clearly operated in favor of someone like West, who gets by on more than just chanting and smash-your-head shock tactics. But after 45 minutes of arm waving and hand-signing the Roc symbol up in the air, it looked as if the headliner might have

a hard time maintaining the crowd's energy level.

Wrong! From the first line—"I'm trying to catch a beat"—West took the baton and clobbered the audience with it. Even crunk territory had to give it up for the Windy City-bred backpack hero. Then again, this wasn't exactly a crunk crowd; it was an often nattily collegiate Rainbow Coalition group—a medley of *Real World* types.

Rocking a magenta polo shirt, plaid shorts, and the requisite backpack, West worked the stage like a skilled boxer rather than a heavy-handed knockout artist—dropping a cool line here, kicking up the volume there. And while the crowd sang along with the live acoustic guitar-augmented "All Falls Down," "Through the Wire," and Luda's "Stand Up" (which West produced), more often than not, crowd members were checking for subtle word-play in between the hooks, showing that this Mouse Town crowd didn't need camera cues to show its appreciation. *Tony Green*

Photograph by JOHN DEEB

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JOI

**TENNESSEE SLIM
 IS THE BOMB**

POOKIE



If her last album was *Star Kitty's Revenge*, then this is her redemption. On *Tennessee Slim Is the Bomb*, Joi sings like she loves herself so thoroughly that, if she transformed into a feline, she would lick herself silly. Narrated by "Uncle" George Clinton, who offers poetic relationship wisdom between each track, this is a delicious declaration of unwavering feminine funk.

Guided by Dr. Funkenstein, Joi personifies music and love on the low-slung "I'm So Famous." She continues to reach new heights on the spiritually rich "Co-Stars," "That's the Truth," and "Another Rocket," where she scrapes the sky with the lyrics, "Sugar, you oughtta know by now



that I just wanna fly to the moon / And even if you won't take me, I know there'll be another rocket comin' by soon."

While much of the music embodies her name, Joi unveils heartache over ex-husband Big Gipp on "Gravity": "The rap game stole my man from me.... I'll always love him, even though he forgot how to." This testament to self-love completely captures joy and pain, sunshine and rain, and confirms that this kitty doesn't merely meow, she roars.

Laura Checkoway

> plugged in

Digital Music Lowdown BY LYNNE d JOHNSON

Music downloaders opting to share files over P2P (peer-to-peer) networks such as Limewire and Kazaa: Watch your backs. The RIAA recently sued 493 more people who illegally downloaded copyrighted music, bringing the total number of suits brought

against file sharers since 2003 to 2,565. And record labels such as BMG and leading independent Koch are pursuing other measures, such as SunnComm's MediaMax CD-protection technology, which enables



authorized CD purchasers only a limited amount of secure burns. The antipiracy practices were tested when a Princeton Ph.D. student published a paper on a Web site explaining how to disable SunnComm's copy-protection feature. Still, the company remains confident that the release of its latest version of the technology will deter illegal file sharing...but for how long?

> a/b conversation

Fly tracks or wack wax? Ask our resident critics, A/B.

> "I WONDER," JA RULE, FEAT. R. KELLY (THE INC.)

A: Singing and silly lyrics?! Looks like Ja Rule is back to the basics.

B: After the video, you're not going to be able to get it out of your head, though.

A: Oh trust me, I will.

B: "If I'm a picture unpainted would you still love me?" What does that mean?

A: Please don't try to draw any conclusions from his lyrics.

B: He just said, "I'm rich, beyotch."

A: At least we know he's watching Dave Chappelle.

B: Whuuut!

A: I said, he must be watching Chappelle.

B: Okaaaay!



> "SUNSHINE," LIL' FLIP, FEAT. LEA (COLUMBIA)

B: This has a nice summer feel to it.

A: I can't wait to hear this chopped and screwed.

B: That's so sweet, she's saying she can be his sunshine.

A: Not if she's anything like the Sunshine from *Harlem Nights*.

B: Wow, a whole Southern record and not one pimp slap.



> "OH MY GOD," TONY SUNSHINE, FEAT. DIRT BAG & P. DIDDY (BAD BOY)

B: There must be a shortage of new song titles if this track is called "Oh My God."

A: It would only work for an R&B song. Or a gospel joint.

B: Sounds like part Urrsher and part Justin Timberlake.

A: Whoa! Even P. Diddy came through on the cosign?

B: Uh-huh...yeah...that's right.



> "I LOVE THEM O'S," EAMON, FEAT. GHOSTFACE (JIVE)

A: How happy is he to have Ghost on this joint?

B: Maybe they knew each other in Staten Island.

A: Yeah, Ghost probably snatched his chain.

B: This dude has cornered the market on ignorant suburban R&B.

A: Yep, he's like Serch's revenge.



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1. Will *White Chicks* finally end **the Wayans brothers'** reign of terror at the box office?

2. Aren't **eThugs** and **Internet beef** the corniest things ever?

3. Wasn't it a surprise to find out that **Kelly Rowland** was engaged to Dallas Cowboy **Roy Williams**,

when we didn't even know she had a boyfriend?

4. Isn't hipster fashion just what the **Beastie Boys** were rocking in 1992?

5. Isn't it time for a **Foxy Brown** comeback?

6. Since **Eric Benet** was the one who cheated on **Halle Berry**, shouldn't he be paying her?

7. How does **J.Lo's booty** feel about getting name-checked in the chorus of that new **Three 6 Mafia** song "Squeeze It"?

8. Since he's rapping about Yonkers on **Jadakiss's** album, aren't we curious to know if **Eminem's** ever been there?

9. Shouldn't **Mos Def** and **Jay-Z** do "The Best of Both Worlds: Backpackers and Ballers"?

10. Isn't **the Game** the truth?



11. Doesn't *The Apprentice's* **Omarosa** look like an evil cartoon of **Kim Porter**?

12. Why do girls wear **shirts with stupid sayings** and then get mad when a dumb guy makes a comment about it?

13. Whether or not we agree with Michael Moore, shouldn't every American see *Fahrenheit 9/11*?

14. Doesn't it seem crazy that just over 10 years back, **beepers** were the pinnacle of technology and were shouted-out in mad songs?

15. Why would **Guerilla Black** think that it's acceptable to sound exactly like **Biggie**?

16. Isn't the whole "izzle" thing just

like "iggity" for a new generation?

17. How long until **Tony Yayo** goes back to jail?

18. Are the ladies ready to forgive **Nelly** for the credit card-booty-swipe incident?

19. After **T.I.'s** vicious dis at ATL's Hot 107.9 Birthday Bash 9 is **Lil' Flip's** "Game Over"?

20. Can **50 Cent** possibly make an album that lives up to his last?

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GEAR: "FRESH TO DEF"

PAGE 124: Shearling trench coat, \$3,490, silk turtleneck, \$490, wool V-neck, \$480, pants, \$645, suede tassel moccasins, \$425, all by **Gucci**, available at select Gucci stores (800-234-8224); newsboy cap, \$150, by **Stetson**, available at Neiman Marcus stores nationwide. Hoodie, \$74.50, and jeans, \$78.50, by **G Unit Clothing Company** (g-unitclothing.com); limited edition Louise Bourgeois Janus print scarf, \$90, by **Helmut Lang**, available at Helmut Lang, N.Y.C. (212-925-7214); premium boots, \$145, by **Timberland** (timberland.com). Cotton jacket with leather buttons, \$895, and corduroy pants, \$295, both by **Pringle of Scotland**, available at Bally, N.Y.C. (212-751-9082); velvet sport coat, \$250, by **Claiborne** (claiborne.com), available at Macy's East & West nationwide; tailored collar shirt, \$249, by **Helmut Lang** (helmutlang.com); trucker cap, \$75, by **Y-3** (adidas.com/y-3); tie, \$39.50, by **Fubu** (fubu.com); J12 watch with diamond bezel, \$8,900, by **Chanel**, available at Chanel boutiques (800-550-0005); 18-karat yellow gold diamond ring, \$8,600, and aces high bracelet, \$400, both by **Stephen Webster** (stephenwebster.com); Italia sneakers, \$280, by **Dolce & Gabbana** (dolcegabbana.it). "Casual Monday" light blue polo, \$45, and "1/3 of 10" navy polo, \$59.50, both by **Cut & Sew**, available at Bloomingdale's stores nationwide (bloomingdales.com); zip-up sweater, \$495, by **Evisu** (evisu.com); dark denim jeans, \$78, by **Rocawear** (rocawear.com); flocked denim fitted, \$40, by **New Era 59FIFTY** (59FIFTY.com); "Huarache," \$125, by **Nike** (niketown.com).

"FINAL TOUCH"

PAGE 126: Trick key ring, \$138, by **Prada**, available at Prada stores nationwide (888-977-1900). Leather sneaker with Velcro straps, \$135, by **Umbro by Kim Jones**, available at Alife, N.Y.C. (646-654-0628). Leather gold-logo buckle belt, \$295, by **YSL Rive Gauche**, available at YSL Rive Gauche boutique, N.Y.C. (212-472-5299).

"AFRO PICKS"

PAGE 130: Cashmere cable-knit sweater, \$225, and gingham dress shirt, \$98, both by **Hilfiger** (h-hilfiger.com). Leo bomber jacket, \$900, by **Y-3** (adidas.com/y-3), available at select Barneys New York stores; grimsel wool scarf, \$98, by **Victorinox by Swiss Army Brands** (swissarmy.com). Velvet fitted shape jacket, \$1,340, and silk crepe shirt, \$560, both by **YSL Rive Gauche**, available at Bergdorf Goodman, N.Y.C. (212-753-7300). Shred shirt, \$42, by **G Unit Clothing Company** (g-unitclothing.com), available at Macy's stores nationwide. Print hoodie, \$108, and knit V-neck sweater, \$130, both by **Umbro by Kim Jones** (umbro-contrast.com). Herringbone coat, \$5,495, by **Michael Kors**, available at Michael Kors, N.Y.C. (212-452-4685); brown cardigan, \$125, and plaid shirt, \$44, by **Ecko Unltd.** (ecko.com), available at Macy's.

"MISSISSIPPI MACKIN'"

PAGES 214-215: Foster and Sons crew, \$45, by **Reebok** (reebok.com); "Noxosto" jeans, \$88, by **Azzurè** (azzuredenim.com); tropical vent air cap, \$36, by **Kangol** (kangol.com); Dunks Mid sneakers, \$70, by **Nike** (niketown.com). "Kimaathi lives on" T-shirt, \$20, by **Jamhuri Wear** (jamhuriwear.com); jeans, \$510, by **Evisu** (evisu.com); baseball cap, \$30, by **Sean John** (seanjohnclothing.com), available at Bloomingdale's stores nationwide; diamond classic chronograph, \$3,200, by **IceTek** (icetekwatch.com). "Drips" tee, \$28, by **Akademiks**, available at Dr. Jay's, N.Y.C. (drjays.com); "Quintempo" steel watch with white diamonds, \$6,990, by **IceTek**; diamond paillettes ring, \$17,350, vogue diamond ring, \$10,950, diamond ring set in 18-karat yellow gold, \$14,125, all by **Cartier** (cartier.com), available at Cartier boutiques.

PAGE 216: Stretch lurex tank, \$250, by **Michelle Mason**, available at Madison, L.A. (323-651-4003); astral skirt, \$960, by **Issey Miyake by Naoki Takizawa**, available at Issey Miyake, N.Y.C. (212-226-0100); "kitchen sink" skirt by **Gary Graham**, available by special order (212-226-8510); gun earring, \$30 a pair, by **Cody** (earringsbycody.com); copper bangles, \$180 each, gold bangles, \$195 each, and silver chain necklace with silver cross pendant, \$430, all by **Erickson Beamon** (212-643-4810); hot pink satin peep-toe pump, \$198, by **Charles David**, available at Charles David stores nationwide (310-659-7110).

PAGE 217: Rabbit fur coat, \$5,195, wool boot-cut pants, \$595, and velvet bow tie, \$120, all by **YSL Rive Gauche** (ysl.com); velvet three-button jacket, \$1,750, by **Gucci**, available at select Gucci stores (guccicom.com); "Warship" repeat-dot shirt, \$265, by **Ted Baker Global**, available at Ted Baker London retail stores nationwide; V-neck wool sweater, \$735, by **Missoni**, available at Missoni boutique, N.Y.C. (212-517-9339); "Strongest Link" bracelet, \$40, by **Kenneth Cole** (kennethcole.com); bronze snake-print lace-up shoes, \$486, by **Helmut Lang** (helmutlang.com).

PAGE 218: Corduroy paisley blazer, \$1,020, by **Etro**, available at Etro, N.Y.C. (212-317-9096); abstract diamond sweater, \$170, by **Umbro by Kim Jones** (umbro-contrast.com); collar shirt, \$78, by **AIX Exchange** (armanixexchange.com); red wool pants, \$435, by **Yohji Yamamoto Y's for Men** (yohjiyamamoto.co.jp); paper straw driver hat, \$28, by **Element** (866-92-SKATE); bandanna, \$38, reaper bandanna, \$38, and gold wolf ring, \$210, all by **WLZ** (wlz.com), available at Nom De Guerre, N.Y.C. (212-253-2891); gold stock ring, \$13, by **Stüssy** (stussy.com); blue lace-ups, \$535, by **Paul Smith** (212-627-9770).

PAGE 219: Raspberry V-neck tee, \$95, by **D&G**, available at Exposure, Staten Island, N.Y.C. (718-980-4933); black rebel skirt, \$450, by **Y-3**, available at Barneys New York, N.Y.C. (212-826-8900); "shiny ghost" hoop earrings, \$285, by **Chanel**, available at select Chanel boutiques (800-550-0005); bangles with Swarovski crystals, \$50 each, by **Tommassini**, available at Maison Weiss, Jackson, Miss. (801-881-4621); turquoise suede slide, \$110, by **Charles by**

Charles David (charlesdavid.com). White cotton T-shirt, \$110, by **Prada**, available at select Prada stores (888-977-1900); white cotton jeans, \$435, by **Gucci**, available at select Gucci stores; paper straw fedora, \$28, by **Element**; metal cuff, \$136, by **Helmut Lang**; chrono sneaker sable, \$500, by **Louis Vuitton** (louisvuitton.com).

PAGE 220: Calf-leather coat, \$6,450, by **Louis Vuitton** (866-VUITTON); T-shirt, \$20, by **Blockwear** (601-201-0658); khaki over-dye jeans, \$68, by **Enyce** (enyce.com); silver link ring, \$13, by **Stüssy**; nubuck-leather boots, \$145, by **Timberland**. Crewneck fleece with Native logo, \$168, by **WLZ**; tweed thick-knit sweater, \$330, by **D&G**, available at D&G Boutique, N.Y.C. (212-965-8000); carpenter jeans, \$69.50, by **Polo Jeans Co. Ralph Lauren**, available at Macy's; flag ring, \$255, by **King Baby** (kingbabystudio.com); Air Force 1's by, \$55, **Nike** (niketown.com).

PAGE 221: Python leather jacket, \$9,900, by **Gucci**; armure tank top, \$415, by **Issey Miyake by Naoki Takizawa**; copper metallic leather miniskirt, \$425, by **Cat Swanson**, available by special order (512-236-9277); half-moon handbag, \$650, by **Corto Moltedo**, available at Jeffrey, N.Y.C.; "Libralta Strass" heels, \$910, by **Christian Louboutin**, available at Christian Louboutin boutique, N.Y.C. (212-396-1884).

"SPLENDOR IN THE GRASS"

PAGE 44: Fushian strapless dress, \$16,160, by **Roberto Cavalli**, available at Roberto Cavalli boutique, N.Y.C. (212-755-7722). Duchesse satin, velvet, and chiffon gown, \$6,025, by **Versace**, available at select Versace boutiques nationwide (888-3VERSACE); velvet wedge sandals, \$485, by **YSL Rive Gauche**, available at select YSL Rive Gauche boutiques, N.Y.C. (212-472-5299).

PAGE 222: Silk ribbon dress with satin fringe, \$7,990, by **Gucci**, available at select Gucci stores (800-234-8224); purple pin-cushion hat, \$425, by **David Mason for Baby Phat** (maisonmason.com); round pendant in white gold with diamonds, \$7,250, by **Carrera Y Carrera** (1-800-CYC-8229).

PAGE 223: Black wool drill bustier dress, \$2,640, and choker, \$1,150, both by **Louis Vuitton**, available at select Louis Vuitton boutiques (866-VUITTON); scarf by **Echo** (echodesign.com); studded felt diving cap, \$175, by **Michelle Deborah** (michelledeborah.com).

PAGE 224: Strapless demin dress with satin trim, \$1,520, by **Carlos Miele**, available at Carlos Miele boutique, N.Y.C. (646-336-6642); velour trilby, \$659, by **Philip Treacy** (philiptreacy.co.uk); "Miss Caroline" heels (on center model), \$595, by **Christian Louboutin**, available at Barneys New York, N.Y.C. (212-826-8900).

PAGE 225: Red dress with side pleats, \$485, by **Y's Yohji Yamamoto**, available at Noodle Stories, L.A. (323-651-1782); antennae headpiece, \$350, by **David Mason for Baby Phat**; "Fluo" belt, \$495, by **Chanel** (800-550-0005); "Fleetwood lo" sneakers, \$79.99, by **Adidas**, available at Adidas Original store, N.Y.C. (212-777-2001). Chiffon halter dress, \$3,200, by **Luisa Beccaria**, available at Barneys New York, N.Y.C.; cascading earrings in white gold with diamonds and rhodolite garnet, \$12,390, by **Carrera Y Carrera**; bourdeaux pearl pump, \$570, by **Louis Vuitton**, available at select boutiques.

PAGE 226: Red silk organza dress with fox trim, \$16,995, by **YSL Rive Gauche**; wrist-length white gloves, \$75, by **La Crasia**, available at La Crasia, N.Y.C. (212-803-1600). Chiffon short dress by **Carlos Miele**; mink ankle-strap pump, \$1,200, by **Gucci** (guccicom.com). Print dress with lace trim and brooch, \$3,350, by **Dolce & Gabbana** (dolcegabbana.it), available at Dolce & Gabbana boutiques nationwide; black and red sandals, \$405, by **Stephane Kélian**, available at Stephane Kélian, N.Y.C. (212-980-1919); 24-karat gold-plated earrings with pearls and crystal, \$340, by **José & María Barrera**, available by special order at Bergdorf Goodman (800-558-1855).

PAGE 227: Duchesse satin, velvet, and chiffon gown, \$6,025, by **Versace**. Fushian strapless dress, \$16,160, by **Roberto Cavalli**; 18-karat yellow gold necklace with amethyst and diamonds, \$14,350, by **Carrera Y Carrera**; floral pointed-toe pump, \$550, by **Gina** (ginashoes.com).

PAGE 228: Silk velvet and tulle gown with Swarovski beads, \$11,900, by **Versace**; mother-of-pearl pendant with diamond accents necklace, \$149, by **LOVE Jewelry Collection** (jewelry.com).

PAGE 229: "Noa" dress, \$3,615, by **Dior by John Galliano**, available at select boutiques (800-929-DIOR); 24-karat gold-plate over brass clip earrings by **José & María Barrera**, limited edition; selection of antique jewelry by **Ancienne Lucienne** (ancienlucienne@yahoo.com); bangles, \$45 each, all by **RJ Graziano** (212-685-1248); "Alice" heels, \$530, by **Christian Louboutin**, available at Christian Louboutin boutique, N.Y.C. (212-396-1884).

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GOOD TIMES:
Sugarhill Gang's
(from left) "Wonder"
Mike Wright, Guy
"Master Gee" O'Brien,
and "Big Bank" Hank
Jackson, circa 1978.

"Rapper's Delight"

Now, what you hear is not a test, it's the beginning of hip hop history.

"I said a hip hop, the hippie, the hippie to the hip hip hop, and you don't stop."

When the first rap record, Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight," was released a quarter century ago this month, hip hop was still the local folk culture of mostly poor, nonwhite, young New Yorkers, unheard beyond the city's borders.

But after seeing Lovebug Starski perform at the club Harlem World, Sugar Hill Records founder Sylvia Robinson perceived rap's wide commercial possibilities—potential to which its own creators were, admittedly, blind. When sought by Robinson for her fledgling label, Starski declined (creating the opening for studio group Sugarhill Gang). "I wasn't interested in doing no record back in them days," he later said, "'cause I was getting so much money for just deejaying."

It was definitely the last time anyone made a decision like *that*. Debuting in September 1979, "Rapper's Delight" was soon selling a reported 50,000 copies a day. It cracked the American Top 40 (hitting No. 36 and No. 4 on the R&B charts)—the first of hip hop's many times doing so—and similarly bum-rushed play lists all over the planet.

A true cultural milestone, "Rapper's Delight" has since been cited by artists as disparate as Erick Sermon's Def Squad ("Def Squad

Delite") and the rapping granny from Adam Sandler's *The Wedding Singer*. The song's borrowed, burbling bass line, tinkling melody (from Chic's "Good Times"), and catchy singsong chorus compacted hip hop's musical essentials into a neat, sensuous formula.

However, most profoundly, the release of "Rapper's Delight" began the multibillion-dollar commercialization of hip hop culture; the start of *the rap music industry*.

Put another way, every rap group, hip hop music video, radio show, magazine, or clothing line out there owes its existence to a single, sim-

"I WASN'T INTO DOING NO RECORD IN THEM DAYS, I WAS GETTING SO MUCH MONEY JUST DEEJAYING."

ple proposition: *There are lots of people who will pay for hip hop culture.* Today this seems completely obvious. But before "Rapper's Delight," no one knew if it was true. By making the oblique apparent, it made the rapid globalization of rap music not only possible but *likely*. It's the most important record in hip hop history for that reason, and one for which we can all be eternally grateful.

Harry Allen



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